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TIP TOP WEEKLY

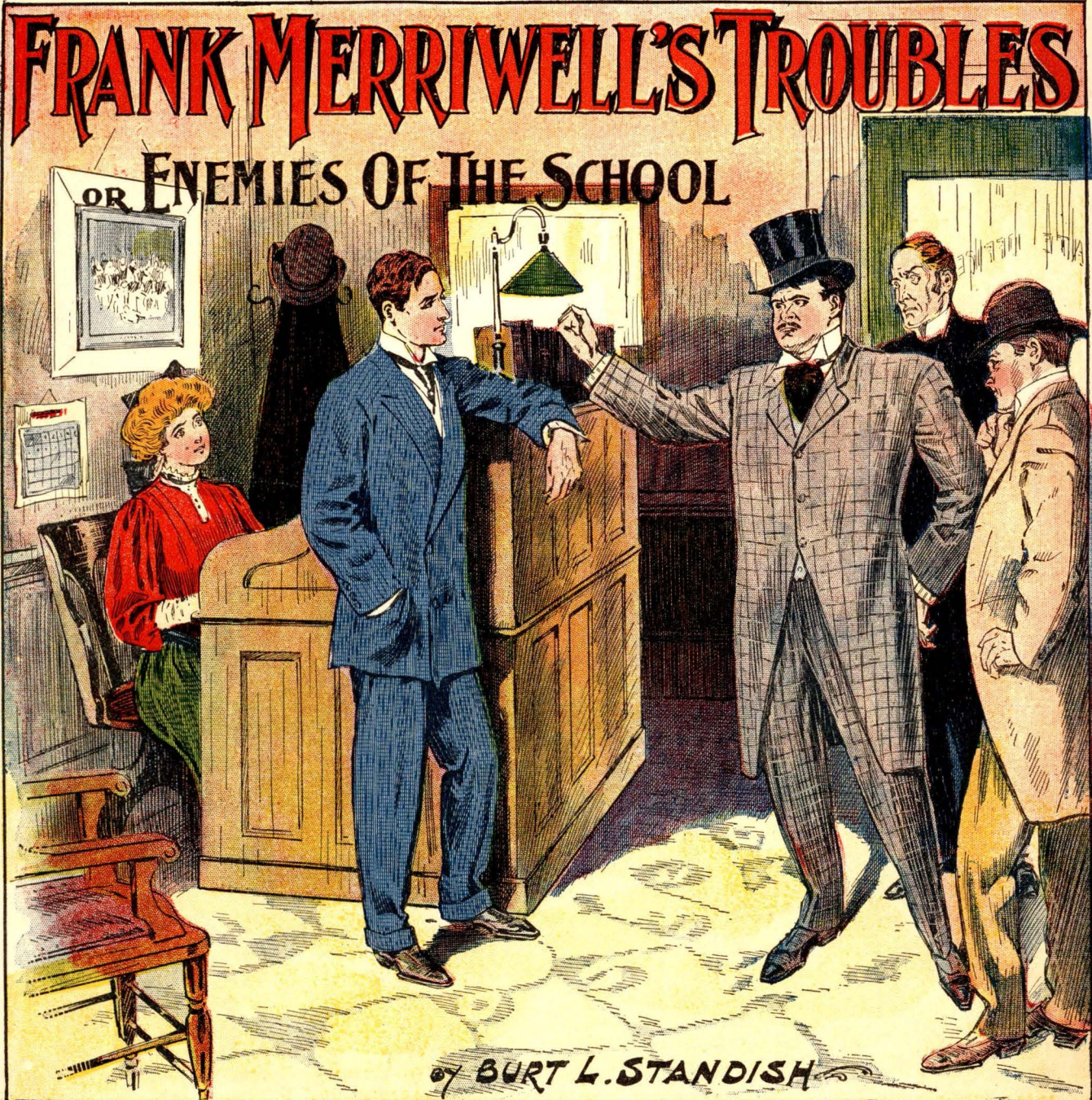
AN
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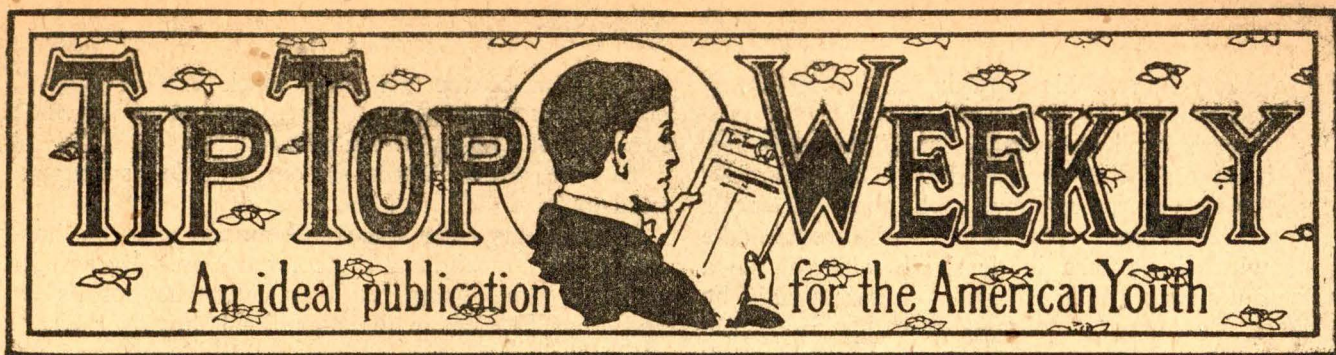
No. 513

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 10, 1906.

Price Five Cents



"Yes, we will state our business!" shouted Batterby, flourishing his ham-like fist. "Our business is to tell you that your school of athletic development is a fraud and you are a fakir."



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FRANK MERRIWELL'S TROUBLES;

OR,

Enemies of the School.

By BURT L. STANDISH.

CHAPTER I.

TOOTS ON THE TRAIL.

It was a desolate road through a lonely strip of wintry woods. By the roadside, just within the edge of some thick bushes, lay an unconscious darky. After a time he stirred, uttered a groan, and opened his eyes.

"Mah goodness!" he muttered. "Whar is Ah at? Bah golly, Ah bet a pint er peanuts something's happened! Wot am de matter wif mah hade? Guess Ah must hab tried ter butt a spress train off de track. Ah don' seem to recommember dis locality. 'Scuse me! Beliebe Ah'll get up."

With an effort he sat up, holding both hands to his head.

"Mah gracious!" he muttered. "Somebody suttinly hit me an awful wallop on de coconut. Whar is dis place? How'd Ah git heah, anyhow? Lemme see. Lemme think. Gee whiz! don' it make mah head ache when Ah try ter think!"

Suddenly he started, his jaw drooped, and his eyes bulged from his head with an expression of terror.

"Oh, land ob massy!" he gasped. "Ah beliebe Ah was takin' de missus out fo' a sleigh-ride! Sho' dat's it! Dat's how Ah happens to be heah sho's mah name's Toots! Did dem hosses run 'way wif me? If dey done dat, Ah'm a no-good nigger! Ah'll jest go off somewhere an' jump off'n de yarth! If anything bad's happened to Missus Inza, Ah'll jest go blow de top of mah fool hade off!"

Running his fingers through his kinky hair he touched a long, swollen ridge just above his right ear.

"Wow! wow! Dat's sholy a pecul'ar bump. Never know'd dat was dere befo'. Mighty so', too. Wot's dis? Dere's bleed on mah fingers! Now Ah jest knows somebody's frowned a brick at me! Ah'm feelin' mighty miser'ble! Ah'm feelin' sick all ober, but Ah jest gut to git up an' do somethin'."

Grasping the bushes he slowly dragged himself to his feet. For a moment or two things seemed to swim around him; but this sensation passed away, and he stood there, desperately trying to collect his scattered

wits. Finally he saw his cap lying a few feet away and picked it up.

"A nigger's skull am mighty hard," he mumbled, "but Ah reckon dat ol' cap saved mine dis time. By golly, Ah recommember now! Oh, massy! but dis am a terrible scrape! Ah was dribin' through dese woods wif Missus Inza in de sleigh when all ob a sudden out jumps a man an' grabs de hosses right by de hade. De man hab a mask ober his face. He cotched de hosses by de bit and stopt 'em. Den Ah yells fo' him to git out ob de way or Ah'd run ober him. De next thing Ah knows Ah don' know nuffin at all. Seems to me de sky jest kim down and bumped me on de crannyum. Anudder man mus' hab soaked me dat crack. Dat's it. Dey've carried Missus Inza away! Wot'll Massa Frank say? Ah'll nebber look Massa Frank in de face again as long as Ah lib! Ah'm a no-good nigger! Ah jest gut to foller dem tracks an' sabe de missus. If Ah don' do dat, Ah suttinly will jump off de fust dock Ah comes to!"

Tortured by shame, disgrace, and anxiety for his mistress' safety, the darky started along the road, following the tracks made by the horses and sleigh.

"Lo'd help me!" he prayed. "Ah ain't nebber been berry religious, an' Ah ain't gut no right to call on yo', good Lo'd, but if ebber a culled individual needed yo' 'sistance, Ah'm dat pusson. Gib me strength to run like de win'. Gib me skill and s'gacity to foller dese tracks. An' when Ah obertake dem ba-a-a-d men, gib me de arm ob ol' Sampson ter slap 'em de way he done slayed de Philistines wif de jaw-bone ob a jack-ass. If yo'll jest done hyar dis prayer, Ah'll promise to be a better nigger de rest ob mah life. Amen."

Whether or not Toots' prayer was answered, certain it is that his strength returned to him amazingly, and he was able to run on mile after mile at a rate of speed quite beyond anything ever before displayed by him. When he began to pant and feel that he must let up from exhaustion he set his teeth and kept on, with the result that his "second wind" came to him, and he found himself running with an ease that filled him with astonishment. Whenever he came to a spot where the road forked he paused barely long enough to make sure he was not being led astray by following the wrong tracks.

Finally he turned into a little-used road, which led into a desolate region amid some wooded hills. There was now no trouble about following the tracks, for they seemed the only fresh ones made on that road in several days.

A man, mounted on a sweat-stained horse, came galloping madly around a bend of the road. At sight of the horse Toots gave a shout.

"It's Lightfoot!" he cried; "it's Lightfoot as sho's Ah'm a nigger! Who's dis man a-ridin' Massa Frank's hoss? Stop, man—stop right whar yo' is! Whoa, Lightfoot—whoa, boy!"

Toots resolutely planted himself in the center of the road, flinging up his hands as he commanded the man to halt and called to the horse.

"Get out of the way, you black imp of Satan!" snarled the man. "Don't try to stop me! A whole regiment of niggers couldn't do that!"

In spite of these words, the darky made a spring and tried to seize the bit of the horse.

The furious rider struck the animal with his hand and drove it straight at the colored man. By a slight miscalculation, Toots failed to catch the horse's bit, and down he went, while the animal shot over him.

Covered with snow and not a little bewildered, the darky sat up and gazed after the disappearing fugitive, who turned in his saddle and looked back, giving utterance to a savage laugh.

"Bah golly, mistah man, Ah didn't stop yo', but Ah'ze goin' to 'member dat mug yo' wear! Ah'll nebber fo'get it! Mebbe Ah'll see yo' again some-whar."

Toots rose to his feet and stood for a few moments, with an expression of bewilderment and uncertainty on his face.

"Now wot's de meanin' ob dis business?" he questioned. "Seems to me dat's sholy one ob de ruffian gents dat run away wif Missus Inza. Whar's de udder one? Whar's de missus? If Ah keeps right on, mebbe Ah'll find her yet."

Some twenty minutes later he came in sight of the old wayside tavern known as The Elms. In front of the stable he saw a sleigh, and a panted exclamation of satisfaction passed his lips.

"Dat's Massa Frank's sleigh sho's Ah'm libbin'! De udder man mus' be right heah. Den it's mighty sho Missus Inza am heah, too. Hello! Great golly, look at dem boys! Whar'd all dem boys come from? Dey look like de boys at Massa Frank's school!"

Several boys came out of the old tavern and started toward the stable. One of them saw the approaching darky and called the attention of the others to him.

"It's Mr. Merriwell's coon," said one. "That's Toots. He was taking Mrs. Merriwell for a drive when Courtney and Roberts held him up."

As Toots staggered up to the house Frank Merriwell himself appeared.

"Oh, bress de Lo'd! bress de Lo'd!" sobbed the darky. "Oh, Massa Frank, Ah'ze so glad Ah found yo'! Ah spect yo'll sholy disown me fo'ebber! Ah'ze de mos' wufless nigger dat ebber was! Ah'ze done let 'em carry de missus off! Oh, Massa Frank, Ah'ze no good! Ah'ze no good!"

He fell on his knees at Merry's feet, clutching the skirt of Frank's coat and clinging to it.

Merriwell lifted the excited darky to his feet.

"It's all right, Toots, my boy," he said. "Mrs. Merriwell is quite safe, and we've captured one of the ruffians. She told me how it happened, and I know you were not to blame."

"Oh, bress de good land!" gurgled the colored youth. "Dis am de bes' news Ah ebber heard in all mah life! Massa Frank, Ah prayed to de Lo'd fo' Missus Inza, an' Ah spect mah prayer was sholy answered. Ah made a promise in dat prayer, an'

Ah'ze goin' to keep it. Arter dis Ah'ze goin' to reform an' be a better nigger."

"Toots," smiled Merry, "they don't make any better boys of your color."

CHAPTER II.

A LITTLE ARGUMENT WITH M'CORD.

"Come," said Frank, "we'll go to Inza. She's been worried about you, Toots. She thought it possible you were seriously hurt when those ruffians yanked you out of the sleigh and threw you into the bushes. She made me promise to send some of the boys without delay to look after you."

"Bress her heart! bress her heart!" chattered the ducky. "A-thinkin' ob me, was she? Bah golly! Ah don't deserbe it. Ah'ze been plumb worried ter def ober her, Massa Frank. Dey don' hurt a nigger much when dey rap him ober de coconut. If yo' want to finish a nigger, jes' soak him on de shins. Oh, wow! wow! how dat do hurt!"

On entering the house Frank found himself confronted by Dan McCord, the proprietor of the place. McCord was a burly, ugly looking Irishman, and he had a reputation as a fighter. Seizing Frank by the shoulder, the man gave him a push that sent him through the open door and into the sitting-room beyond. The Irishman followed promptly.

"Now be afther looking here, me foine laddybuck!" he growled, as he confronted Merry, scowling blackly. "Oi have a few worruds to say to yez."

It must be confessed that Frank had been taken by surprise, else McCord would not have succeeded so easily in pushing him about. Now, however, Merriwell was on his guard, and he stood facing the Irishman, his hands resting on his hips. There was a slight smile on his lips, which McCord misconstrued as an expression of pacification. Had he known Merry better, he would have realized that the smile was a danger signal.

"Mah goodness! mah goodness!" muttered Toots, as he edged into the room. "Thar's sholy gwine to be trouble here! Massa Frank nebber 'lows nobody to poke him that way. When they git to pokin' him he pokes right back, an' he pokes 'bout fo'teen times as hard."

"You have something to say to me, have you?" asked Merry grimly.

"Thot's phwat Oi have!" rasped McCord.

"Well, go ahead and say it."

"Oi will."

"Then why don't you?"

"Oi will, Oi say! Oi want to know phwat all this divvilmint manes about me house!"

"Perhaps you can explain that yourself. According to the reputation of your house, a great deal of 'divvilmint' has taken place here."

"Howld on! howld on!" shouted the proprietor of The Elms, flourishing his huge fists. "Don't youse be afther casting insinuations on me house! Oi won't

shtand for it! Oi'm a respectable mon, and Oi kape a respectable house."

"Your ideas of respectability may not agree with the ideas of really respectable people."

"It's a sharrup tongue yez have, me lad. You're a smarrut bhoy, but it's careful ye'd better be whin you're talking to Dan McCord. Thot's me. Oi say Oi want to know phwat all this divvilmint manes. You come to me house wid a lot of rapscallions, and ye smash things generally. You break in me doors. You smash me windies. Yes take possission av the place as if it belonged to yez. Be th' howly Saint Pathrick, ye'll pay for iverthing ye've broke, and ye'll pay well! Thot's phwat Oi mane, and thot's phwat Oi want! Oi want me pay for th' damage ye've done."

"It strikes me you're a trifle hasty, McCord. It strikes me you are decidedly insolent."

"Insolence, is it?" shouted the infuriated man. "Phwat do yez call it whin yez brake into me house and smash things th' way ye have? Insolence? By th' sod thot bore me, you're th' most insolent young mon Oi iver set me two eyes on! But Oi'll tach yez a lesson!"

"Oh, mah goodness!" muttered Toots. "Ain't dat Irish gent gwine to git a sluggin' pretty soon! Ah bate fo' dol's Massa Frank puts him to sleep wif a left hook on dat waggin' jaw ob his."

"Now" said Frank calmly "it happens that you're interfering with me at the wrong time McCord. Whatever damage I'm responsible for I'll pay for. I give you my word for that."

"Your worrud?" sneered the proprietor. "Oi want more than your worrud! Oi want me money and Oi want it now! It'll cost yez a hundrid dollars."

Merriwell laughed quietly.

"That's pretty nearly as much as your old ranch is worth," he retorted. "I think I broke down a door up-stairs. I'll pay for that when I find out how much it will cost to replace it."

"Did yez forgit the windy, me bhoy?"

"I had nothing to do with that. The man who sprang out of that window and tried to escape is responsible for it."

"Ye'll have to pay for the windy," asserted McCord.

"Do you know what's going to happen to you, my man?" demanded Frank. "The career that you're following is going to land you in State's prison. I may feel it my duty to give the officers some assistance in putting you there."

"How dare yees talk to me loike thot?" snarled the Irishman.

"Do you know you've been harboring kidnapers?"

"Who do yez mane?"

"I mean those two ruffians who brought the lady here. One of them has escaped on one of my horses. Therefore, he is also a horse thief."

"It's respectable dhoctors they are," declared McCord. "Th' lady do be insane. They were takin' her to the asylum at Wellsburg."

"Is that what they told you?"

"Shure an' it is."

"Well, they lied to you. The lady is my wife. They are ruffians. One of them is being guarded at this moment in an upper room. As soon as I can reach a telephone station, I shall send out word for the police everywhere to look for the other rascal. I've spent too much time in explaining to you, McCord. Stand out of my way."

Frank advanced toward the door, but McCord blocked his path.

"Not on yer loife!" grated the Irishman. "It's all true ye may be tellin' me, Oi dunno. Shtill, me bhoy, av two min bring a lady to me house and say they're dhactors that are takin' her to an asylum, it's me place to provide accommodations for thim. Thin if another party come to me house and broke me doors and windies, it's me place to collect pay for th' damages. Howld on! Be Hiven, ye'll nivver lave this room till ye sittle!"

"Thot's right, Dan!" cried the voice of a woman, and Mrs. McCord appeared in a doorway leading to the kitchen, a rolling-pin grasped in her hand. "Make him sittle wid yez at once!"

"It's sittle he will, Kate, me girrul," nodded McCord, without taking his eyes off Frank.

Suddenly Merriwell made a forward spring, ducking as McCord struck at him. An instant later the Irishman was pitched headlong into a corner, the impact of his body against the wall causing the whole house to shiver.

"Bah golly, Ah jes' knowed it!" muttered Toots. "Mebbe dat will settle dat gent's dinner fo' him."

McCord was astonished, but his rage was redoubled. With a roar, he leaped to his feet.

"They'll take yez home on a stritcher, me laddy-buck!" he snarled, as he rushed at Merry.

Frank sidestepped, seized the man's wrist, turned his hand upward, brought McCord's arm over his shoulder, and the Irishman's heels suddenly went up against the ceiling, bringing down a strip of plaster. Right over the table in the center of the room sailed Dan McCord, landing on his head and shoulders when he struck the floor.

Mrs. McCord gave a screech of astonishment and rage and sprang at Merry, flourishing the rolling-pin.

"Hold on dar, womans!" cried Toots, as he thrust out a foot and skilfully tripped her. "Don' yo' be so promisc'us! Don' yo' try to caress nobody on de hade wif dat rollum-pin! If yo' git so keerless, mebbe yo'll hurt somebody."

By this time the darcy was comfortably seated on Mrs. McCord's head.

"Whoa dar—whoa, womans!" he cried. "Don' yo' go to buckin' an' kickin'! Jes' yo' recumber easy on de flo'! Jes' yo' keep quiet while Massa Frank settles de hash ob dat no-count ma-a-a-n ob yours!"

In spite of himself Merry smiled as he saw Toots repressing and restraining the excited woman in this manner.

Mrs. McCord squawked and kicked in a desperat-

effort to cast the darcy off and rise to her feet, but, in spite of all her struggling, Toots maintained his position and prevented her from taking any part in the "argument" between McCord and Merry.

It happened, however, that the argument was pretty well settled, for the Irishman had been stunned when he struck the floor, and, as his wits slowly returned, he found himself wondering if he had collided with a cyclone.

Merry pulled the man to the wall and placed him there, with his back against it.

"I have a few more words to say to you," Frank observed. "You may not realize it, but you're escaping easily. Had I seen fit, I could have broken your arm or your neck. I should have been justified in breaking either. Instead of that, I handled you gently."

"Is thot phwat yez call it?" muttered McCord wonderingly.

"If you again lift your hand to interfere with me or any of my party while we are here," Merriwell continued, "I'll give you the worst thrashing of your life. Not only that, but I'll land you in the county jail. I won't stop there. I'll prosecute you to the full extent of the law for keeping a disreputable and disorderly house. I'll close The Elms and put you out of business. Do you get that?"

"Yis, sor," muttered the Irishman meekly. "Me ears are good, even av me whole body sames paralyzed. It's ivident Oi made a mistake. Oi apologize. Is your name Sandow?"

"My name is Merriwell. Perhaps you haven't heard of me, but—"

"Oi have," confessed McCord. "You're th' gint phwat's opened the new School av Athletic Developmint over at Bloomfield. Begorra, it's succiss ye'll make af it, if yez can tach iny one to do the tricks you do yoursilf. Oi think Oi'll come over and join your school."

"Let the lady up, Toots," smiled Frank.

"All right, sah," chuckled the darcy. "Jes' as yo' say, sah. Bah golly! she's the mos' res'less pusson Ah eber set down on in all my life."

"Phwat has ye done to me mon?" demanded Mrs. McCord apprehensively. "Oi nivver saw iny one do inything to Dan McCord before. Oh, Dan, Dan, has he hurted yez?"

"Whist, Katie!" answered McCord, making signs to her. "Be aisy and don't arouse him. Av he iver puts hands on yez, he'll throw yez clane up through the roof av the house. Oi'm all right, praise be the saints! but it's only because he handled me aisy thot Oi'm not distributed in peaces all over the room."

"And did he pay yez the money, Dan?" inquired the woman.

"Whist! be aisy, be quiet! Spake not av thot! Oi'll pay *him* money av he'll git out av me house and lave me in peace!"

Several of the boys were peering into the room and asking questions. Frank turned to them reassuringly.

"It's all right, boys," he said. "There's no trou-

ble here. Mr. McCord and I have had a little argument, and I think he agrees with me."

"Oi do," confirmed the proprietor. "Phwativer yez say, Oi agree wid yez. Oi dunno phwat it is, but Oi'll swear it's so as long as Oi have breath to spake. Kate, me girrul, have ye carried up the coffee for the lady? Af ye haven't, be afther gittin' a move on yersilf. Mishter Merriwell, av there's inything Oi can do, spake up and see me do it."

CHAPTER III.

THE CAPTIVE.

Obedient to the command of her husband, Mrs. McCord hurried into the kitchen, quickly reappearing with a tray, on which were dishes and a pot of steaming coffee.

"Bah golly!" chuckled Toots, as he followed Merry up the stairs; "yo' suttinly shook a superfluity ob ginger out ob dat McCord ma-a-a-n. Dat gent was as fierce as a wolf at de start an' as gentle as a lamb at de finish."

In one of the upper rooms they found Inza, with two of the boys, who had been left to take care of her.

"Here he is, Inza!" cried Frank. "Here's Toots, and he's all right!"

"Oh, Toots," she exclaimed, forcing a smile, "I'm so glad!"

"Mah goodness, Missus Inza," gurgled the colored boy, "Ah'ze de tickledest coon on de face ob dis eart'! Ah'ze sholy ashamed ob mahself fo' lettin' dem two rascal men carry youse off. When Ah done come to mah senses back dar in dem woods an' recommembered what had happened, Ah was plumb crazy, missus—plumb crazy! Ah prayed, an' Ah suttinly guess de good Lo'd heard mah prayer, fo' he sent Massa Frank to help yo'."

The darky kissed Inza's hand over and over, his black face literally beaming with the emotions his lips could not utter.

"Oi have the coffee for the lady," gently suggested Mrs. McCord. "Ach, hone! what a poor, dear lady she is! To think thim skallewags would be afther sayin' she were out av her moind!"

"That'll do, Mrs. McCord," said Frank. "Leave the coffee and set the tray on the table. Toots will pour the coffee for her."

"Mah gracious, yes!" chuckled Toots. "Ah'll done po' de coffee. Will yo' hab some sugar an' a little ob de cream, missus? Bah ginger! Ah beliebe dis am actually real cow cream! Well, wouldn't dat make yo' laugh! No skim milk 'bout dat! It am de genwine article."

"No sugar, no cream, Toots," said Inza. "Just the plain coffee will be best for me."

The delighted colored youth poured the coffee and handed it to her with the air of a waiter in a swell hotel.

"Ah hopes dat tickles yo' palate, missus," he said, "and steadifies yo' nerbes."

The color came back to her face as she sipped the hot coffee.

Mrs. McCord had hesitated at the door.

"Is there inything ilse Oi can do for the dear lady, Oi dunno?" she asked humbly.

"Nothing now," answered Frank. "If she wants anything, you'll be called."

"They tell me one of those men escaped," said Inza.

"Yes," nodded Merry, "Roberts got away, but I hope he won't get far. Two of the boys are watching Courtney in another room. He's bound hand and foot, so there's no chance whatever for him to make trouble or get away. If I dared leave you, Inza, I'd ride to Five Forks and telephone from there. It wouldn't take me long. I suppose I'd better remain here though, even if Roberts does get a good start."

He bent over her, with an arm about her shoulders. Their eyes met, and the look that passed between them warmed Toots' heart with a sudden glow. Immediately the darky turned to the two boys, exclaiming:

"Jes' you two youngsters take yo'selves out ob heah! Mebbe yo'll be needed bimeby, but yo'll be called when yo' are. Close de do' as yo' pass out. Dat's right."

When the boys were gone the colored youth betrayed a most surprising interest in the pattern of the paper on the wall opposite Inza and Frank.

"Mah goodness, what pretty paper!" he muttered, keeping his back toward the other occupants of the room. "Ah sholy nebber s'pected to see such beautiful paper in dis place. Too bad it's faded, an' de ceilin' hab leaked, streaked it ober like dat. When Ah builds mah house Ah'm suttinly gwine to decorate one ob mah rooms wif paper jes' like dis. Don' nobody mind me, fo' Ah'm completely absorbed in speculatin' on de beauties ob dis wall-paper. Don' believe Ah could see anything else if Ah had to, an' both mah ears are plugged up so Ah can't hear a sound unless somebody sticks a pin in me to wake me up."

Both Frank and Inza were shaken by silent laughter as they glanced toward the faithful darky. She held up her lips to Frank, who kissed her tenderly.

"Dat's right—dat's jes' right," muttered the darky. "Dat am beautiful paper. Ah s'pects Ah'll stan' heah lookin' at dat paper fo' an hour, 'less somebody pinches me."

"Toots!" called Frank.

"Yas, sah! yas, sah!" answered the colored youth. "Did yo' speak to me, sah? Mah goodness! Ah plumb fo'got yo' was in de room, sah."

"Do you know which of those two ruffians struck you?"

Toots scratched his head.

"Dunno's Ah do," he confessed. "To tell yo' de trufe, Massa Frank, Ah nebber seen de one dat gib me de crack on de crannyum. Ah was lookin' at de gent dat had grabbed de hosses bah de bit."

"Would you like to take a look at one of them?"

"Yas, sah, Ah sholy would like to inspect de pussilanimous rascal, if yo' hab no objections."

"Then call those boys back here to stay with Inza."

When the two boys returned, Toots followed Merry to another room. They passed a broken door near the head of the stairs and rapped on another door at the rear of the house.

"Who's there?" called a voice from within the room.

"Open the door, boys," directed Frank. "It is I."

They heard a rusty bolt complain in its socket, and the door was cautiously opened.

"It's all right, Hollis," said a voice. "It's Mr. Merriwell."

Victor Maynard and Fred Hollis were the two lads guarding Charles Courtney. Courtney sat on a chair, to which he was securely tied by stout cords. He glared sullenly at Frank as Merry stopped before him.

"Is dis de gent?" cried Toots, surveying the captive with disdain. "Well, sah, yo' suttinly done a fine piece ob business! Yo' hab ebery reason to be mighty proud ob yo'se'f!"

Courtney snarled.

"What do you mean by bringing this nigger here to mock me, Merriwell?" he cried fiercely. "You ought to be satisfied, don't you know! By Jove, I'll never get over the shame of it! One of those boys jumped on me and held me until the others could help him."

"You taught him the trick, Courtney," reminded Frank. "When you pinned Bob Bubbs to the mat in the gymnasium and twisted his arm so that he was rendered absolutely helpless, you taught him a lesson that aided in your undoing. The unbridled spirit of revenge is a very dangerous thing."

"Bah! Don't lecture me!" rasped the Englishman. "You may talk rot to those boys as much as you like, but spare me."

"You know what I'm telling you is true, but you may not have taken into consideration the fact that even worse than your thirst for revenge was your thirst for liquor. It was whisky that robbed you of reason and judgment. It was a brain befuddled by drink that led you to plan this foolish piece of work, which has brought you such a miserable finish."

"It am mighty bad business monkeyin' wif de red-eye," put in Toots. "Ah knows dat from sperience. Dat stuff has done ruined mo' pussons dan all de udder concoctions de debbil eber brewed."

"Talking about revenge," said Courtney, "I suppose you mean to send me to prison now, Merriwell? What do you call that?"

"Courtney, you are a dangerous man. You have transgressed the law. If given the opportunity, you would do so again. Had you struck at me alone, I might have had an inclination to be more lenient with you, but when you struck through my wife you ended all possibility of leniency."

"All right, go ahead! Do your worst, Merriwell! But remember this, I am your enemy to the finish!

If they send me to the stone jug, I'll come out some-time, and, when I do, you'll hear from me!"

"Better not threaten," warned Merry. "It will count against you, man."

"Oh, let de po' fool talk hisse'f into de jug fo' jes' as long as he wants to," urged Toots.

Frank turned away.

"Keep good watch over him, boys," he said. "I may have to leave this house for an hour in order to do some telephoning. Under no circumstances are you to leave Courtney alone."

"Oh, depend on us, sir!" cried Victor Maynard. "We'll take care of him! We'll look out for him!"

As Merry and Toots left the room, the door was again closed and the bolt pushed into its socket.

"There's no question of danger, Inza," said Frank, on returning to her. "Courtney is bound and guarded. The McCords are frightened and inclined to be more than friendly. Toots will stay right here with you. If Roberts had not escaped on one of the span, I'd remove you from this place without delay. Bob Bubbs tells me the only horse besides my own in the stable is a broken-down, spavined old nag of no value. I can't hitch that beast up with Dick. If I can take Dick, and ride to Five Forks, I'll be able to telephone and warn the officers to look out for Roberts. At Five Forks I can secure a horse to pair up with Dick, or I'll bring back a turnout of some sort. I'll return as quickly as possible. Shall I go?"

"Go, Frank," she said bravely. "I feel that all danger is past."

Five mintutes later, Frank Merriwell was riding away from The Elms, mounted on Dick.

CHAPTER IV.

COURTNEY'S ESCAPE.

"Hollis," said Victor Maynard, after Frank's departure from the room, "I'm crazy for a cigarette. I've got to have one, or blow up."

"Better not smoke," cautioned Fred Hollis.

"Why not?"

"You may be detected."

"How?"

"If any one should come——"

"The door's bolted, isn't it? Merriwell is going away, and we have orders not to admit any one else. Look here, Hollis, if you'll hike out, and rake me up a few cigarettes, I'll be your grandmother."

"Oh, not I!" exclaimed Hollis, shaking his head. "I won't help you out."

"Give you a dollar," said Vic, producing a shining silver dollar, and holding it up before his companion's eyes.

"Jerusalem! You must be daffy for cigarettes!" cried Hollis. "Perhaps I can't get any."

"You can try. This joint is supposed to be a tavern. I fancy some of the customers who come here smoke cigarettes. Give you a dollar if you get a

package. Give you half-a-dollar if you don't, but you've got to go out, and make a search for them. Don't let the other boys into it."

"Give me your half-dollar in advance," demanded Hollis. "If I get the cigarettes, I'll collect the other half when I come back."

"All right," said Maynard, returning the dollar to his pocket, and bringing forth a half. "But don't you work any gum game on me. After I get out of here, I'm going to find out if there are cigarettes in the place. If you come back, and tell me you couldn't get any, I'll know you fooled me."

"Well, don't you blow on me," cautioned Hollis. "If you're caught smoking, don't tell anybody I got them for you."

"Oh, rot!" growled Vic. "I won't peach."

"And keep watch of this gent, too."

"Trust me for that."

Maynard unbolted the door, and Hollis slipped out. Pushing the bolt into its pocket, Victor turned, and faced Courtney.

"Well, say," he observed, in deep disdain, "you certainly were a chump!"

"Now, don't you commence!" growled the Englishman.

"I say you were a chump," repeated Vic. "I didn't think it of you! I thought you had a little sense."

"Well, I suppose Merriwell was right in what he said about drink," muttered the man. "Drink did it."

"Evidently you're one of the kind who can't drink without going all to the bad. You're in a bad scrape, Courtney. Merriwell means to push you to the limit."

"I know it."

"Don't it frighten you?"

"I'm not pleased over it."

"I suppose you'd give a lot to get out of the scrape."

"Who wouldn't, if he stood in my shoes?"

"There'll be no chance for you after Merriwell turns you over to an officer."

"There doesn't seem to be much chance for me now," muttered the Englishman.

Of a sudden, the man glanced at Maynard in a peculiar manner. Their eyes met, and both were silent for several moments.

"I'll give you fifty dollars to do it," said Courtney.

"Fifty dollars?" whispered Maynard. "Why, that's not much. I want more than that."

"It's all I have."

"Oh, come, come; don't tell me that!"

"I swear I haven't over sixty dollars to my name. I have a check Merriwell gave me, but you couldn't collect anything on that."

"How do you know?"

"Of course I don't know, but I don't see how you could. You shall have it, and the fifty with it, if you'll set me free."

"Wait a minute," said Victor. "How are we going

to work this thing? If I set you free, there'll be an awful row over it."

"If you do anything, you'll have to hustle. That other boy will be back here directly."

"But there's no time to do it until he gets back. I'll have to devise a scheme to get him out of the room after he returns. Besides that, I want to find out if Merriwell has left. It wouldn't do you much good to get out of this room, with Merriwell around. He'd be almost certain to detect you before you could escape. If he's gone, there may be a show for you. Right back of the house here are some thick pines. If you can get out of the house and into those woods, without being seen, you ought to make a good start. But I'll tell you what you've got to do. I'll set you loose, but I'm going to cut some of those ropes. Then I want you to tie me and gag me. I'll have a story for Merriwell, all right. You jumped out of one window to-day, and you can jump out of another. You could never get down-stairs without being seen. You'll leave the door bolted, just as it is now. That will keep the fellows out long enough for you to get a fair start."

By this time the Englishman was shaking all over with eagerness and excitement.

"I'll do just as you say," he promised; "but for Heaven sake, don't wait another minute! Go ahead, and set me loose now!"

There came a knock on the door, and Maynard hastened to answer it.

"Who is it?" he called.

"Hollis," was the answer.

To Courtney's dismay, Vic opened the door, and Hollis entered.

"Did you get them?" asked Vic.

"Sure thing," was the reply. "The old woman of the house had some. She said some of the fine young 'gintlemen' who come here smoke cigarettes. I had to pay her a quarter for this package, so you owe me seventy-five cents."

"All right," said Victor, "here's your money, Fred, old man. Where's Merriwell?"

"Oh, he's just left. He's started for Five Forks."

"Jimminy!" exclaimed Vic, after feeling through his pockets. "I haven't a match. Got a match, Fred?"

"Now, why should I carry matches?" demanded Hollis. "I don't smoke."

"Well, what the dickens can I do with a cigarette without a match?" growled the other boy. "Got a match, Courtney?"

"No!" growled Courtney.

"You should have brought matches, Hollis. Come, now, hustle out, and get me some."

"You're a lot of trouble!" growled Hollis. "All right, I'll get you some matches."

Maynard opened the door to let Hollis out. The moment the door was rebolted, Victor whirled about, producing a jack-knife, which he opened.

"Now we'll do things in a hurry!" he hissed, as

he sprang toward Courtney. "You've got to move on the jump, man!"

He slashed at the ropes, and set the Englishman free.

"Give me the money and that check!" panted Vic. "Then gag me, and tie me to the chair. Here, I'll put this knife back in my pocket. Come, now, the money."

Courtney seemed to hesitate. He grasped the back of the chair in a doubtful manner.

In his excitement, Maynard dropped the jack-knife when he tried to slip it back into his pocket. He stooped to pick it up.

Charles Courtney lifted the chair, and brought it down with stunning force upon the boy's head.

Without a sound, Maynard fell in a huddled heap on the floor, stricken senseless.

"You infernal fool!" hissed the desperate man. "Did you think I'd give you my last dollar? Lie there until your friends find you!"

He crossed the room, and looked out of the window. As Maynard had said, there was a thick patch of woods at the back of the house. Courtney pushed up the window, crept out over the sill, and leaped toward a bank of snow.

The snow served to minimize the shock when he landed. He waded out of the snow-bank in desperate haste, and went staggering into the gloom of the pines.

CHAPTER V.

MAYNARD'S STORY.

"Hello, Hollis!" exclaimed Bob Bubbs, encountering Fred in one of the lower rooms of the old tavern. "When did you escape from the cage?"

Hollis flushed, and looked uneasy.

"Don't be so funny!" he snapped. "You think you're a great deal brighter than you really are, Towser."

"My, but you're touchy! I thought you were detailed to look after old Courtney."

"I was."

"Well, what are you doing here?"

"That's none of your business!"

"I don't know about that," said Bubbs, beginning to get angry himself. "I rather think I had something to do with the capture of Courtney; and, since finding out all the rascality he's been up to, I want to see him get his medicine, just as he deserves. Did Mr. Merriwell tell you that you might leave that room up-stairs?"

"That's none of your business, either!" flung back Hollis. "There was a good reason why I left the room. Maynard's there, and he'll look out for Courtney."

"Now, he's a fine chap to look out for any one!" grinned Bubbs derisively. "I'd trust him with a million dollars—I don't think! You'd better hustle back, and get onto your job. If you don't like it, I'll

take it. Courtney won't get away with me watching him."

"Oh, he can't get away, anyhow," declared Hollis. "He's tied so that he can barely wiggle a toe. We could go away and leave him, and he'd be right there when any one wanted him."

"That may be so," admitted Bubbs. "But when Mr. Merriwell tells me to do a thing, I propose to do it."

"You're a saint!" sneered Hollis. "I suppose you're trying to make up for that racket you raised the first day of school. Between you and me, you're to blame for all the trouble Courtney's in."

Bob whistled, and winked.

"Now, tell me—tell me!" he cried. "How do you figure that out?"

"Why, if you hadn't worked that Schnitzle joke, and made Courtney ridiculous, there'd been no trouble. He got mad with you, and anybody knows he wasn't very much to blame."

"Evidently you appreciate a real good practical joke!" exclaimed Towser derisively.

"Oh, practical jokes are fine—for the jokers. They're rough on the jokees. I want to tell you something, Bubbs, and I hope you won't forget it. If you ever play a practical joke on me, and make me ridiculous, I'll break your little neck!"

"That's fine!" grinned Bob. "You frighten me terribly! I'm afraid my neck will be in constant danger hereafter. Look here, Hollyberry, old slobsky, if I ever get a good chance at you, I'll make you the laughing-stock of the school, just on account of that little threat."

"You try it!" grated Hollis. "You try it, and I'll keep my word! I'll break your neck!"

"Oh, I don't know! Courtney tried to break my arm. He taught me a fancy trick, and I played it back on him. If any one plays a practical joke on me, I'll take my medicine, and keep my face closed. But if any one tries to do me personal injury, that's a different thing. You're wasting lots of time down here, Hollis. If you're not going back to your post, I'll go in your place."

"You don't have to!" muttered Fred. "You attend to your business, and I'll attend to mine!"

But when he reached the door of the captive's room, and knocked upon it, there was no answer. In vain he repeated the knock, and called to Maynard.

"Hi, there, Vic!" he cried. "Open up! What's the matter with you? Why don't you answer?"

Not a sound came from within the room.

"That's mighty queer!" muttered Hollis. "It can't be Vic's left Courtney alone in there! Of course not, for he couldn't fasten the door on this side. There's no lock—nothing but a bolt."

With growing alarm, he kicked on the door, and began to shout loudly to Maynard. His cries and the thumping on the door soon brought several other boys hurrying up the stairs.

"What's the matter? What's the matter?" they demanded.

"I don't know," confessed Hollis. "I can't get any answer from Maynard. Left him in there to watch Courtney a minute."

"A minute?" exclaimed Bob Bubbs. "I think you were out of there more than one minute!"

"What fo' am yo' boys makin' all dat racket?" called Toots, peering out from Inza's room. "Does yo' wan' to frighten de missus mos' ter deaf? Stop dat noise!"

"Tell her not to be frightened," said one of the boys. "We're trying to get into this room, that's all. The fellow inside has fastened the door, and we may have to break it open."

"Dis sholy am a house ob trouble!" muttered the darky. "Dis am a hoodoo house. Ah wouldn't stop in dis place overnight if somebody done made me a present ob it."

The boys resumed their pounding and calling at the door of the captive's room.

"Howld on there, ye young divvils!" cried the voice of Dan McCord, as he came hurrying up the stairs. "Are yez tryin' to tear me house down?"

"There's something wrong here," explained Bubbs. "We can't get into this room. We can't get any answer from it. The door's fastened on the other side."

"Who's in there?" questioned McCord.

They explained the situation to him, after which he thumped savagely upon the door with his knuckles, and demanded admittance.

Still there was no answer.

Dan McCord flushed with anger.

"There's niver a room in me own house thot Oi can't inter!" he shouted, backing off from the door.

A moment later his body crashed against that door with sufficient force to burst the fastenings of the bolt. The door flew open, and McCord staggered into the room, followed by the boys.

On the floor lay Victor Maynard, still unconscious.

"Where's Courtney?" shouted Bob Bubbs.

"That's right," gasped Fred Hollis, "where is he?"

"You're a good watch-dog, Hollyberry!" burst derisively from Bubbs' lips. "What's the matter with Maynard? He seems to be done up. See here, fellows, here are some pieces of the ropes with which Courtney was tied. That rope was cut. Courtney's escaped!"

Oliver Slick, who had been nicknamed Oily, seemed to be the only one who was not greatly excited. He glanced around the room in a cunning manner, and then softly tiptoed to the window. A glance through that window showed him the tracks Courtney had left when he fled into the woods. Oily nodded, and whispered something to himself. Following this, without calling attention to himself, he stole from the room.

One of the boys brought some water, and dashed it into Maynard's face.

Vic stirred, and uttered a faint groan.

"See here, boys," said Bubbs, calling the attention of the others, "Maynard's been knocked out, all right. His head is cut, and he's bleeding."

Dan McCord stood with his hands on his hips, an expression of anxiety and indignation corrugating his unpleasant face.

"It's glad Oi'll be whin the whole av yez lave me house!" he growled. "Nivver before have there been such doings benath this roof."

Bubbs bathed Maynard's wound, washing the blood out of his hair.

"It's quite a crack," he said. "I hope it didn't fracture his skull."

"I—I—want—the—money!" muttered Vic.

Then he opened his eyes, and stared blankly at the faces about him.

"What is it?" he questioned huskily. "What's the matter, fellows?"

"Courtney's escaped!" cried Hollis. "He's not here! Where is he? How did he get away?"

"Courtney?" mumbled Maynard. "Why, he—I— Is he gone?"

"Certainly he's gone. How did he get away? I left you to watch him."

"So you did! So you did!" muttered Vic, trying hard to collect his wits, and invent a plausible story, by which he would not incriminate himself. "I thought I heard you at the door. I went to open it. Heard something behind me. Looked around, and saw a man jump out of that closet."

A chorus of exclamations burst from the boys.

"A man?" they cried. "There was a man in that closet?"

"Sure thing," lied Vic. "He had a knife in his hand. I tried to open the door, and shout for help. He rushed at me, and struck me on the head with something. That's all I know. Next thing, I found you fellows here. Oh, my head—my head!"

"What did the man who struck you look like?" questioned Bubbs.

"I don't know! I can't tell!" moaned Vic.

"You saw him, didn't you?"

"Yes, but I was frightened."

"But you must remember something about him."

"He was tall and dark—had a full beard. That's all I remember."

"Well, how did they get out of this room, and leave the door bolted?" cried another boy.

"The window—that's the only way," said Bubbs.

They rushed to the window, and looked out.

"That's right! That's right!" they cried. "There are the tracks! Come on, boys! Let's try to follow them!"

"Don't all leave me!" groaned Maynard, sitting up with an effort. "Oh, my head!"

But the excited boys dashed out of the room, and left him alone.

CHAPTER VI.

SLICK OLIVER.

As the boys rushed out of the house, they encountered Oliver Slick.

"Where are you going, fellows?" he inquired, in his smooth way.

"Come on! Come on!" they shouted. "Where have you been? Courtney's escaped! We're after him!"

"You don't say!" murmured Oily, with pretended astonishment.

Instead of following them, he ran up the stairs, and sought Maynard.

Victor had managed to rise from the floor, and was sitting on a chair, with his head between his hands.

"Hang that miserable Englishman!" he muttered. "He fooled me! He came near killing me! Then I had to lie, just the same."

"Dear me!" murmured Oily, who had stepped into the room with a silent step. "What are you talking about, Maynard?"

"Eh?" exclaimed Victor. "I didn't hear you."

Oliver looked out of the window, and saw the boys following the tracks into the woods.

"Ah-ha!" he laughed softly. "You'll be surprised, some of you."

On reaching the back of the house, the boys had discovered many tracks in the snow-drift, as if several persons had been wading about there. They likewise found the tracks of two men, leading into the woods.

"Victor told the truth," said one. "Here's the footsteps of Courtney and the chap who helped him escape."

On entering the woods, these tracks separated and led in different directions. Several of the boys, including Bob Bubbs, followed one of the trails, while others took the other trail.

"It's no use," declared Fred Hollis, who was with Bubbs' party; "they'll get away from us. They have a fair start."

"We'll try to run this fellow down," muttered Bubbs. "We'll make him hurry some."

But suddenly, after following the trail a short distance, Bob halted, with an exclamation of great astonishment.

"What is it?" cried the others.

"Look here, boys!" invited Bob. "Don't take another step, but just look at these tracks!"

No wonder Towser was surprised. The tracks before him were plain enough for a distance of four or five feet, but suddenly they ended in the midst of a little opening. It was a most amazing thing, for beyond the point where the tracks stopped the snow lay smooth and unbroken.

"Well, what do you think of that?" demanded Bob. "Where's he gone?"

"Up a tree," suggested one.

"But look!" cried Bubbs, pointing at the footsteps in the snow; "there's no tree near the spot where these tracks stop. He couldn't climb a tree from that point."

"That's right! That's right!" they chorused.

"Then where did he go?" shouted Fred Hollis. "Did he sink into the ground?"

Bubbs shook his head.

"This is the most peculiar thing I ever struck," he confessed. "Here's a mystery, boys. I wonder if the tracks of that other fellow will end in the same manner."

"It's like witchcraft," muttered one of the bewildered lads. "It seems as if something just whisked him off into the air."

They gathered around the point where the tracks ended, and entered into an excited discussion of the mystery.

"We may as well look around everywhere in this vicinity, and see if we can find any more tracks," suggested Bubbs.

They searched in vain.

In the meantime, Oliver Slick was giving his attention to Victor Maynard.

"You crept out of a pretty small hole, Vic," he purred.

"What do you mean?" asked Maynard apprehensively. "Crept out of a small hole? I don't understand you."

"Don't you?" smiled Oily.

"I certainly do not."

"How much money have you in your clothes?"

Vic glared at Oliver, who was cool and insinuating in his manner.

"What has money got to do with it?" demanded Maynard.

"I don't suppose you took that bump on the head for nothing," chuckled Slick.

"Have you gone daffy?"

"Oh, not a bit of it! Now, look here, Vic, what sort of a yarn did you put up to the fellows? Now, tell me what you told them."

"Why, I told them the truth," declared Victor, attempting to appear very honest. "I told them there was a man in that closet, and he jumped out on me. He hit me on the head with something, and knocked me silly."

"I knew you'd put up a yarn like that," grinned Oliver. "I figured it out to a T."

"It was true."

"Was it?"

"Of course it was! I hope you don't think I'm lying?"

"I suppose it would give you an awful cramp to tell a lie!" sneered Oily. "Look here, Vic, I've been trying to help you out."

"Help me out?"

"Sure."

"How?"

"As soon as I found you stretched out here on the floor, and saw Courtney was gone, I took a look out of the window. I saw his tracks. All the fellows were gathered around you, jabbering excitedly. No one was watching me. I slipped out of the house, and ran around under the window. Then I made lots

of tracks in the snow, with the idea of confusing the fellows. While I was doing that, I worked out your whole yarn in my head. The ropes with which Courtney was tied were cut. I knew you'd claim somebody besides you cut those ropes. But if the boys found only the tracks of one man outside the window, they'd think your story pretty thin. I got a move on, and made another trail into the woods. Right in the middle of a little opening I stopped, and then walked backward in my own tracks until I reached the house again. If that don't bother them a little, I'm a lobster."

Victor Maynard stared at Slick dazedly.

"I don't see why you did all that," he muttered.

"Oh, I'm pretty clever," nodded Oliver. "I'm onto you, too. You were thick with old Courtney before he left the school. The moment I came in here with the others, and found him gone and you stretched on the floor, I knew you were the one who set him free."

"It's not so," said Vic weakly.

"Oh, yes, it is," chuckled Oily. "You can't fool me, old man. He paid you to help him get away. Now, Vic, my boy, we'll go halves. Cough up!"

"I didn't get a cent!" groaned Maynard.

"That won't wash with me," said Oliver. "I'm from Missouri. You'll have to show me."

"All right," mumbled the young rascal. "I'll turn my pockets inside out. I haven't more than two dollars to my name. You can search, if you want to."

"I won't be satisfied until I do," said Oliver. And he proceeded to search Maynard thoroughly.

"Now do you believe me?" demanded Victor.

Oliver whistled softly to himself, seeming to be in meditation.

"When do you get the money?" he finally asked.

"I tell you I don't get any!" snarled Vic. "I hope you haven't made a worse mess of it by being so smart, and trying to help me out. Do you think I'm fool enough to let any one thump me on the head and knock me senseless for a little money?"

"Let me see how bad you're hurt," urged Slick. "Why, by jingoes! You did get a crack, didn't you?"

"Of course I did."

Of a sudden, a new light seemed to dawn on Oliver.

"Well, well!" he muttered. "That was pretty rough on you, wasn't it?"

"Yes, it was rough. I——"

"You made a deal with Courtney. You set him free, and then he knocked you out. Now, don't put up any more of that bluff to me. That's exactly what happened. You'd better trust me, Vic. If you don't, I'll never try to help you again. Now, I'm right about this thing, am I not?"

Once more Maynard sank down on the chair, and held his head in his hands, with his elbows resting on his knees.

"You're right, Oily," he confessed. "I did help

Courtney escape. He promised to give me money. I tried to squeeze all I could out of him. After I freed him, he hit me, and knocked me senseless. I didn't get any money. I say it was a dirty, mean trick, and I hope they catch him, and send him to prison!"

CHAPTER VII.

DEACON ELNATHAN HEWETT.

It was late in the afternoon when Frank Merriwell returned from Five Forks. He came in a sleigh, behind a span of horses, having secured a mate for Dick at the Forks. It was Bob Bubbs who met him, and told him what had happened while he was away.

Merriwell's face became very stern, and he betrayed no sign of temper. Instead of that, he called for Victor Maynard, whom he questioned searchingly.

Inwardly quaking with fear, Maynard, pretending to be very ill, answered ramblingly.

"One of those two men seemed to vanish in the air," asserted Bubbs. "His tracks just seemed to come to an end in a little opening in the woods. Several of the fellows followed those of the other man until he struck the road leading to the east. He had a good start, and they could not overtake him."

"I'm not to blame," mumbled Maynard. "I hope any one doesn't blame me, after what has happened to me."

Merriwell turned away, and hurried to the room where Toots was guarding Inza.

"Oh, I'm so glad you've returned, Frank!" exclaimed his wife. "There has been a terrible racket in this house. I don't know what it's all about. I kept Toots here with me all the time."

"Are you strong enough to return home now?" asked Merriwell. "I have a team at the door."

"Oh, I can't go too soon to suit me," she breathed. "Just help me get on my wraps."

"Will you trust Toots to drive you?"

"Why—why, can't you come with me?"

"While I was away, Courtney escaped. That's what all the racket was about. I'm going to try to track him."

"But it's so late! You can't do it to-night, Frank!"

"I'll follow him as far as I can. Perhaps I'll be able to find out the course he has taken in his flight. Of course I'll drive you home, sweetheart, if you're afraid. But, if you'll trust Toots, I'll send one of the boys along with you, and there's no possibility that you'll be molested again. Those men are both fugitives from justice. The police have been notified to look out for Roberts. I telephoned a description of him to various towns around here. If I can't trace Courtney, I'll notify the officers to look out for him, also."

"Toots can take me home, Frank," said Inza bravely. "When shall I expect you?"

"It may be late this evening before I reach home. You won't worry about me?"

"Oh, no; for I know you can take care of yourself."

"Spoken like my brave little wife," he smiled, as he finished aiding her to don her wraps. "Now I'll help you down-stairs, and see you off."

"Say, Massa Frank," cried Toots, "don' yo' beliebe Ah better hab ah deadly weapon ob some sort? Ah'd jes' like ah razzor. Gib me ah razzor, an' dar can't ah whole regiment ob ba-a-a-d men take de missus away from me. Ah'll hab mah peepers open, sho's you lib. Dey won't work dat trick on me again."

"I don't think you'll need a razor, Toots," laughed Frank.

Inza was placed in the sleigh, with Toots on one side of her and Sam Higgins on the other. Sam was a big, raw-boned fellow, who seemed afraid of nothing.

"Now, boys," said Merry, when he had waved farewell to his wife, and she had disappeared in the distance, "we'll get onto our snow-shoes again. At best, it will be some time after dark before we can get back to the academy. If any of you wish to strike straight for Bloomfield, you may do so. I'm going to hit the trail of the man who escaped to the east."

"We're with you!" shouted the boys, with the exception of Victor Maynard and Oliver Slick.

"I'm awfully sick, Mr. Merriwell!" moaned Vic. "I don't know's I'll be able to get back to Bloomfield."

"I'll stick by him, sir," said Oliver. "I'll see that he gets there all right."

"Very well," nodded Frank; "it's up to you to look out for him, Slick."

It was growing dark when Merriwell, with the boys straggling along behind him on their snow-shoes, finally approached a country road some miles from The Elms. A tinkling of sleigh-bells reached Merriwell's ears, and he saw a turnout approaching. A white horse was attached to the sleigh, in which sat two men.

"Perhaps they've seen something of Courtney," thought Frank, as he hastened toward the road.

The men saw him, and one of them seized the arm of the other, betraying either excitement or alarm. A moment later this man settled low down on the seat, and pulled the robe up over his head. The other man grasped the whip, and began to lash the horse.

"I know that man!" exclaimed Merry. "It's Deacon Hewett, of Bloomfield, as sure as I'm living! What the dickens does he mean by such actions?"

Merriwell made a rush to reach the road and head the turnout off. In this he was unsuccessful, for the white horse went galloping past, just as Frank arrived at the roadside fence.

"Hold on, deacon!" Merry called. "I want to speak to you."

"Can't stop," was the answer. "I've got a sick man here, and I'm driving to the doctor."

Merry remained astride the fence, and watched the sleigh until it disappeared in the distance. Then he turned to the boys, who were gathering about him.

"We'll strike straight for Bloomfield," he said.

At eight o'clock that evening, Frank Merriwell rang the bell at Deacon Elnathan Hewett's door. In shirt-sleeves and slippers, with an oil lamp in his hands, the deacon finally appeared at the door.

"Did you find the doctor all right, Mr. Hewett?" asked Merry.

"Eh? Hey?" exclaimed the deacon, shading his eyes with his hand, and holding the lamp high. "The doctor? Oh, yes."

Although he was not invited to enter, Merriwell stepped into the hall.

"I have a few words to say to you, Mr. Hewett," he said calmly. "Perhaps you'd rather hear them by yourself, with none of your family present."

"I don't know what you can have to say to me," muttered the deacon. "Well, if you've got anything you want to say, I s'pose I'll listen. Come right into the parlor. The folks is in the sitting-room."

The parlor proved to be one of those cold, barren places so often found in village houses.

Deacon Hewett placed the lamp on the center-table, and turned toward Merry, with a trace of defiance in his manner.

"I'm 'bout ready to go to bed," he explained. "I hope you can make what you've got to say purty short."

"In the first place," said Frank, "I'd like to ask you a question. What were you doing six miles from Bloomfield, with a sick man in your sleigh, driving toward this place, in search of a doctor?"

"Eh? Hey? What was I doing? Why, I told you I was going for a doctor, didn't I? Didn't you hear me? That's my business, young man."

"Who was the sick man?"

"That's none of your business, young man."

"Why did he pull the robe up over his head, so I could not see him?"

"Look here, young feller, I don't want none of your insolence! I don't want you comin' to my house and axin' me no insolent questions! The man was cold, and he pulled the robe up to keep hisself warm."

"That man," declared Frank Merriwell, "was a culprit. That man was Charles Courtney, lately discharged from my employ. He entered my house, and insulted my wife. I kicked him out. Following that, with the assistance of another man, he attacked my colored boy on the way, knocked the boy senseless, and carried off Mrs. Merriwell."

"Hold on!" cried Hewett. "Hold right where you are! How dare you come here and tell me I had a criminal in my sleigh?"

"Mr. Hewett, I know you have been opposing me ever since I bought the Farnham place. You tried to get possession of the place yourself. You came near spoiling my chance of getting it. You've been telling round town that my school is a fraud. You're doing all you can to injure me. But I want to warn you, sir, that you'll get into serious trouble if you assist a scoundrel like Courtney. It may be that you're harboring that man under your roof to-night.

If so, take my advice, and turn him out at once. The officers in this place and other places have been warned to look out for him. I have sworn out a warrant for his arrest, and the sheriff of the county will do his best to apprehend him."

"I don't keer a fiddlestick what you've done!" snapped the deacon. "I have said that your school is a fraud, and I repeat it. I'm agin' any such foolish schemes. You call it a school! He, he! I call it a nuisance and an imposition on the people of this town. You've got a little money, and you've come back here buying up property that other folks want, and making a great show. You think folks ought to take stock in you and your school. Well, sir, they don't take stock in you. I want you to understand there are lots more like me who say you're a fraud. Of course you had trouble with the man you hired to help you in your rattle-brained scheme. How could you help it? I met Mr. Courtney once, and had a talk with him. He seemed like a gentleman, which is more than I can say for you, young man. You're in my house. I'm ready to go to bed, and I want you to get out. Is that enough?"

"That's quite enough, Mr. Hewett," bowed Frank. "I'll go. I'm very glad to know just where you stand, and I think you'll hear from me again. Good night."

The deacon followed Frank to the door, and slammed it behind him.

CHAPTER VIII.

MRS. HEWETT PUTS HER FOOT DOWN.

"Drat him!" rasped Elnathan; "I say drat him! I've got no use for young fellers like him, who think they're so all-fired smart and knowin'! In my day 'twas different. I had to work and scheme and skinch for every cent I've got. It took me a long time to get anything together. Look at that insolent chap! A few years ago he didn't have a penny to his name. His Uncle Asher Merriwell left him the old Merriwell estate. The boy squandered it—or his guardian squandered it, which is the same thing. He had to leave college and go to work on a railroad. Now he comes back here with slathers of money, repurchases the old property, fixes up the old house like a mansion, builds stables, buys horses, has everything he wants, and makes a show. Not only that, confound it! but he meddles with my business. I wanted the Farnham place; it's valuable. I'd had it for a low figger, only for this meddling feller. He bought it right out from under my nose, and I'll never forget it—I'll never forget it!"

The door of the sitting-room was flung open, and a stout, red-faced woman appeared in the doorway.

"Here, deacon," she called sharply, "what be you muttering 'bout there in the hall? Be you talkin' to yourself? You're gitting that way lately. I heerd your visitor leaving, and heerd you going on alone."

"I ain't got a doubt of that, Mirandy!" nodded

Elnathan, with something like a sneer. "You allus hear everything in this house. You're allus listening."

"Now, see here, Deacon Hewett," said the woman sternly, "I don't want none of your 'sinuations!'"

"No 'sinuation 'bout it, Mrs. Hewett. It's plain talk. I s'pose you was listening at the door, to hear what was going on in the parlor."

"Couldn't help hearing ye. You talked loud enough. Now, you come in here, deacon, and we'll have a little talk. You and I don't allus agree on everything."

"That's right, dod gast it! No man ever could agree with you on everything. If he did, he'd be a fool."

"Don't swear, Deacon Hewett!"

"I didn't swear!"

"You said 'dod gast it.'"

"That ain't swearing. I've got to say something to relieve my feelings. I tell ye, my feelings has been harrowed up. That insolent Merriwell feller said enough to make me bile over like a tea-kettle on a red-hot stove."

"Mebbe he told ye the truth. Mebbe that's what's the matter."

The deacon had entered the sitting-room, where Mrs. Hewett now stood before him, with her arms akimbo and her hands on her hips. She was a vigorous, healthy, cow-looking sort of woman, who was physically able to take her husband over her knee and spank him, if she wished to do so.

"Well, by ginger!" rasped Hewett. "I told him a few things, I guess! I give it to him right straight from the shoulder. He knows now what I think of him."

"And you know what he thinks of you. You 'cused me of listening, Deacon Hewett. Well, I did listen. You know what I told you after you had a talk with this man, Courtney, t'other day. You come home, and said Courtney'd been treated outrageous by Merriwell, who had fired him. You was mighty sympathetic with Mr. Courtney, you was; but I've allus noticed that your sympathy is of the selfish sort. You sympathize with folks when you think it's for your own interest to do so. You're allus lookin' out for yourself, Deacon Hewett."

"Oh, I be?" he cried. "Well, I guess there's somebody else who's allus lookin' out for themselves. I ain't callin' no names, but mebbe you know who I mean."

"That's a slap at me, I s'pose. I don't mind it. I've stood enough of 'em to git used to it. Why, if it wasn't for me, you wouldn't have a dollar to your name."

"I ain't got many dollars to my name, as it is. 'Bout everything is in your name."

"That's right. You deeded the property over to me when you got into trouble with the Potter heirs. You were made administrator of old Sam Potter's property, and got yourself appointed guardeen for

the Potter children. When Ruf Potter come of age, he begun to investigate, and, the next thing you knowed, he was threatenin' to sue you for misappropriating funds that belonged to him and his sisters. You was in a mighty bad scrape, Deacon Hewett, and you got skeert. All my life I've been urging you to deed this house and farm to me. You had other property enough. You'd never sign over anything to me before that, but you jest hustled over to Lawyer Dobbs, and made over everything, arter Sam Potter threatened you. I took keer to have them deeds registered, and to git my hands on them. Since then, I've taken mighty good keer to keep 'em, too."

"Oh, yes! Oh, yes!" snarled the deacon. "You've tied my hands! I can't make a move without comin' crawlin' round you, and axin' you shall I do this or shall I do that! That's my reward, arter savin' and scrimpin' and workin' all my life to git a little something together. Only for you, I might have bought the Farnham property, even if I did have to bid over Merriwell. You set a price on it, and told me I could pay just so much, and not another dollar. When he offered more—there I was! I had to throw up my hands. Anybody with sense knows I'd made money on it, if I'd had to pay three thousand more than Merriwell bought it for. It's galled me most masterly to have him come here and make such a big spread. I never see him walkin' on the street that I don't feel like takin' my cane, and layin' it across his back."

"I wouldn't advise you to do it, deacon," said the woman, with a touch of sarcasm. "He's a pretty energetic young man, and he might shake you up, if you tried to cane him."

"Oh, yes; they say he's a fighter. They say he's a great athlete. But you wait, Mirandy Hewett—he'll meet his match some day. I'm not through with him! He had cheek to come right into my house, and insult me to my face! He calls his old institution on the Farnham place a school. He, he! A school! I want you to know, woman, that I'm supervisor of schools in this town, and I'm goin' to interest myself in this Merriwell school! I'll put an end to it! I'll stop it! I'll leave him with his old school building utterly useless on his hands. It'll be dead property, and then we'll see if he don't feel like selling. Leave it to me, and I may get hold of the Farnham place yet."

"You think you're a little smarter than you really be, deacon. Something tells me you'll make a mighty big mistake if you go medding with this young man's business. You're all right to deal with country folks, but Frank Merriwell is too smart for ye."

"Oh, he is, is he?" cried the infuriated man. "That's what you think of your husband, is it? You think a youngster like that is too smart for Elnathan Hewett! Well, I'll show ye before I'm done—I'll show ye! I'll show him, too! I ain't never gi'n up getting the Farnham place, and I don't propose to. I'll make that feller no end of trouble before I'm done with him."

I'm going to consult with Lawyer Dobbs to-morrer. I'm going to find out if Merriwell has any right to start up an institution like that and call it a school. If it is a school, I'm going to know if it comes under the school laws and regulations of the State. In that case, if it does, I'll show him my authority as supervisor."

"You're going to get into a mess, deacon!" declared the woman. "You've put your foot in it, all right!"

"I'd like to know how?"

"By having anything to do with that Courtney. He's a bad man and a criminal."

"He's been misused."

"That ain't for you to judge. I heerd Merriwell tellin' ye what he'd done. Now, Deacon Hewett, I decline to harbor criminals under my roof."

"Under your roof?"

"Yes, under my roof! This is my house! I won't keep that man here another hour! He's got to go!"

"Why, Mirandy!"

"Don't 'why, Mirandy' me! I've put my foot down, deacon, and I mean it. He's got to go to-night. If he don't, mebbe there'll be an officer here to-morrow to arrest him, and to arrest you for harboring him."

"Would you turn him out on a night like this?"

"There are other places where he can get shelter. I tell ye, I won't let him stay here. You've got to notify him that I say so, and I mean it."

In vain Deacon Hewett tried to reason with his wife. She was a woman of determination, and, once her mind was made up, she refused to change it.

"The Lord knows it's a cruel thing, Mirandy," groaned Hewett; "but you're sot—dreadfully sot! There's no turning ye, and I s'pose I'll have to give in."

He mounted the stairs, and rapped on the door of a chamber. As there was no answer to his knock, he opened the door, and entered. A lamp was burning on a little stand near the head of a bed, and on this bed lay Charles Courtney, sound asleep, with an empty whisky flask beside him.

"Here, you!" cried the deacon, grasping the sleeper by the shoulder and shaking him. "Wake up!"

"What's the matter?" asked Courtney thickly, as he opened his eyes and stared at the deacon.

"Frank Merriwell's arter ye!"

"Curse Merriwell! I'm tired. Let me sleep."

"You can't sleep here. I tell ye, he's been here to this house, and notified me that an officer would come to arrest ye in the morning."

At last Courtney was wide-awake, and, with a bitter exclamation, he sat up on the bed.

"Been here, has he?" growled the Englishman. "Well, I suppose you kicked him out of doors?"

"I didn't, but I wanted to—dad him it, I wanted to!" cried Hewett. "I'd give twenty-five dollars—yes, I'd give a hundred dollars, if I could find a man who'd thrash him within an inch of his life."

"Perhaps I can find you such a man," suggested Courtney.

CHAPTER IX.

THE NIGHT FREIGHT.

"Eh? Hey?" exclaimed Elnathan. "Why, what do you mean?"

"You're supervisor of schools in this town, aren't you?"

"Yes, siree, that's what I be."

"Do you have calisthenics in your schools?"

"What's them?"

"I mean are the scholars in the regular schools of this town given exercises for their physical betterment?"

"Well, I should say not! That's folderol! That's nonsense! They can get exercise enough outside of school hours. Some of them has to git exercise. Some of them works."

"Work of the ordinary sort is seldom proper exercise for a growing boy or girl, don't you know?"

"Now, you git out! I don't take a bit of stock in that nonsense."

"That's where you make a big mistake," said Courtney. "That's where you'll find yourself behind the times, the first thing you know. The trouble with most country schools is that they fail to keep up with the march of progress. Not only is this true in the matter of studies, but it is particularly true in the matter of calisthenics. The time will come, sir, when every school in the country will have a regular physical-culture drill, which will be given at a fixed period, both morning and afternoon."

"Fiddlesticks! Fiddlesticks!" snapped Elnathan derisively.

"You may cry fiddlesticks as much as you choose, but you'll find I'm correct. Now, sir, why don't you make a move that will place you abreast of the times?"

"What be you drivin' at?"

"Why don't you employ a teacher of calisthenics for the schools of this town? In that way you could show yourself decidedly up to snuff, don't you know. At the same time, you might employ a man who would be able to meet Merriwell, and give him the jolly good thumping he deserves. In that way, too, it might not cost you a penny of your own money. Do you get my idea?"

"I never thought of it in that light before," admitted the deacon. "By jingoes! There may be something in it."

"Of course there is. I'll find you the man. I'll send him to you. I'll get a man who can act as physical director in your schools. At the same time, I'll get a man who is capable of thrashing Frank Merriwell. After his arrival, it will be your business to see that he gets at Merriwell, don't you understand?"

"He! he!" snickered the deacon. "Fine! fine! It's a great idee, Courtney—a great idee! Jest as you say, I can pay him out of the school funds. I can fix it all right by calling the committee together. They'll do anything I say. I'll call a meeting, and I'll draw their attention to this School of Athletic Development run by this here Merriwell. I'll tell 'em we're gittin' be-

hind the times. I'll tell 'em other schools all over the country are goin' in for such things. I'll urge 'em to get ahead of Merriwell by introducing 'em into our schools. They'll do it. They'll do anything I tell 'em. Dad bust me if I don't keery this thing out, and upset some of Mr. Merriwell's calkerlations! The idee of a school jest given to this physical-culture business is all rot, but it can be worked in as a regular course in the regular schools."

"Now you've got your eyes open, deacon. Let me sleep; I'm tired."

"Tain't no use, Courtney. You can't stay here to-night. The old lady says so, and that settles it. I've got to put ye out."

"Well, this is a blooming fine go!" rasped Courtney. "What'll you do with me?"

"Well, I've been thinking—I've been thinking I'd drive ye over to Wellsburg, to git ye there in time to catch the midnight spress."

"That won't do."

"Why not?"

"Merriwell has telephoned all over the country for the officers to look out for me. There is every probability that I'd encounter an officer at Wellsburg."

"But he wouldn't have no warrant for your arrest."

"He could take me for a suspicious person, and hold me until a warrant arrived. No, deacon, I can't take that train."

"Well, if you stay here until morning, you'll be arrested, anyhow."

"Isn't there any other way you can think of?"

Elnathan Hewett scratched his head.

"I dunno," he muttered. "Mebbe you might git onto the freight at Baxter's Crossing. It stops there gin'rally 'bout eleven o'clock, to water up."

"The freight?" exclaimed Courtney, with sudden interest. "That's a good idea, deacon. What is Baxter's Crossing?"

"Northin' but a cross-roads and a water-tank."

"There'd be no officer watching the freight," said the Englishman. "If I could board it, I might be out of the county before morning."

"Out of the county? You'd be out of the State."

Courtney rolled out of bed.

"I'm for the freight," he declared. "Get me there, deacon—get me there!"

"All right. I'll have the team hitched right up. You dress, and come down."

Hewett hurried to a room at the rear of the house, and banged on the door. From within the room came a sleepy grunt.

"Git up, Lige!" commanded Elnathan; "git up, and git into your clo'es!"

"What's wanted?" called a voice from within.

"I want you to hook up Fanny for me."

"Hook up Fanny?" muttered the voice. "At this hour?"

"Now, don't you go axin' no questions; but jest you harness Fanny, and hook her into the cutter."

"All right, deacon."

Five minutes later, Deacon Hewett's hired man descended the back stairs, lighted a lantern, and made his way to the barn. In a short time, Fanny was harnessed and attached to the cutter. The deacon came out, bundled in a heavy overcoat, and gave directions in regard to robes and other things.

"Now you may go back to bed, Lige," he said, taking the reins.

Wondering over his employer's strange action, the hired man retired to the house. Having extinguished the lantern, he peered forth from a window, and beheld another well-bundled figure slipping out and getting into the cutter. Deacon Hewett got in, also, and away they went into the darkness.

"That's mighty queer, mighty queer!" muttered Lige sleepily. "The deacon's up to something. He brought that man here, and now he takes him away. Well, there ain't nobody can keep track of all Elnathan Hewett's doings. I'm going to bed."

At 10.49 P. M. a heavy freight-train drew up at Baxter's Crossing. The engine stopped abreast the water-tank, and preparations were made to take water. Deacon Hewett and Courtney had been waiting in the cutter at the roadside for full thirty minutes. The deacon had driven into the shade of some thick trees, and the turnout could not be seen from the railroad track.

"There she comes, Courtney," said Hewett, as the engine whistled in the distance. "I s'pose I've been running a resk by what I've done, but I couldn't help it, when I knowed I was botherin' that feller Merriwell. Anybody that's agin' him I sympathize with."

"I'm ever so much obliged, don't you know," said Courtney. "I won't forget you, deacon."

"That's right; see that ye don't. I want ye to send that physical culture chap you spoke about. Pick out a buster. Send me one that can wallop Jim Jeffries."

"You may depend on me, sir. But I must have your assurance that the man I send will be generously paid."

"Don't you worry 'bout that. I'll fix it. He! he! I'll fix it so the school funds will be used to pay him. It won't cost me northin'. You send him right along. I know what I can do. Here's your train, and I hope you kin git aboard."

Courtney stole along the road toward the train, while the anxious deacon watched and waited. At the water-tank, the engine panted like a tired monster. The furnace door was flung open by the fireman, and a glare of light shone forth.

Courtney paused, and crouched close by some cedar bushes.

"This is my first attempt to beat a railroad," he muttered. "It goes against my grain, but I have to do it."

One of the train-hands passed along the top of the cars.

"I mustn't be seen," whispered the man by the bushes. "If they see me, they'll kick me off."

Beset by uncertainty, he waited until the tank of

the engine had been filled and everything was ready for the start. He saw a trainman wave a lantern. Another lantern made an answering signal, the engine bell clanged, and the train began to move.

Setting his teeth, Courtney rushed forward, and flung himself between two of the freight-cars, grasping an iron ladder. He climbed up onto this ladder, and clung there.

Suddenly an exclamation of dismay escaped the Englishman. Close at hand, clinging to the ladder of the opposite car, was another man. Courtney feared it was one of the train-hands.

"Blooming rotten luck, don't you know!" he muttered.

"Hello!" exclaimed the other man, who had heard these words. "Is that you?"

"I suppose it is," replied Courtney. "Who are you?"

"You ought to know me," was the answer. "My name is Roberts."

Gaining headway each moment, the heavy freight rumbled on, carrying Courtney and Roberts beyond the clutches of Frank Merriwell.

CHAPTER X.

UNTRoubLED BY HIS TROUBLES.

True to his malicious and revengeful disposition, Elnathan Hewett did everything in his power to arouse public sentiment in Bloomfield against Frank Merriwell.

In that little town, the deacon was, to some extent, a man of influence. The very fact that he was regarded as a wealthy man caused many to look up to him. This was true, even though it was generally acknowledged that he had obtained his wealth by oppressing the weak and "pinching the poor." Hewett had his enemies, but few of them dared breathe a word against him. He was crafty enough to maintain his position of power, in spite of the hidden undercurrent of adverse sentiment.

Bloomfield had a local correspondent for the Wellsburg *Daily Herald*. Elnathan Hewett saw this correspondent, and talked to him. The following day, the Wellsburg newspaper contained an article concerning Frank Merriwell's school, and the trouble he was having. This article was written in a sarcastic and ridiculing vein. Among other things, it contained the following paragraphs:

"Mr. Merriwell's fine school, by which he proposes to make such wonderful reforms in the muscular de-

velopment of the rising youth of our great country, has proved a wretched fiasco. It is probable Merriwell anticipated a grand rush of scholars. It is probable he expected the finest people in the land would fall over themselves in anxiety to send their sons to this marvelous school. He has made preparations to accommodate several hundred scholars, but, thus far, there are less than fifty pupils, and it is almost certain that this number will dwindle and become still smaller within a short time. We feel quite safe in predicting that the 'American School of Athletic Development' will close its doors forever within three months. When this happens, Merriwell will find a white elephant on his hands, in the shape of the buildings he has constructed on the old Farnham estate. Here will be a chance for some one to buy a whole lot of property for a song.

"At the very outset, the scheme was devised by what, to reasonable minds, seems a disordered brain. It was ridiculous to imagine that rational people would think of sending their boys to such an institution, where they are to learn nothing of real practical benefit, and where they are to spend their time in circus gymnastics and foolishness. Boys can learn to play baseball at any school. As for football, the general sentiment of the public is against this game. Nevertheless, we understand that Professor (?) Merriwell intends to maintain football as one of the courses of his classical academy. The boys admitted there are generally weaklings. With such physical defects as would bar them from the football team of any reputable school, it will be a splendid thing for these puny fellows to engage in the gentle game of football. Of course, a few dozen of them may sustain serious bodily injuries which will add to their physical enfeeblements. Possibly a few may be killed. Still, we must all admire the judgment of Mr. Merriwell in the matter of teaching such lads to slug and kick and chew up their opponents on the gridiron.

"Already two of Merriwell's instructors have become disgusted and left him. Charles Courtney, a cultured Englishman, was engaged as wrestling and boxing master. Mr. Courtney knows his business, but his ideas did not correspond with those of his employer, and he ventured to criticize the methods of the school. As a result, Merriwell flew into a passion, and discharged Courtney. William Roberts, the swimming instructor, was so thoroughly disgusted by Merriwell's action that he resigned and left our town. Before Professor Courtney left town, Deacon Elnathan Hewett, our supervisor of schools, had an interesting

talk with him. Courtney believes that calisthenics may be introduced with benefit into the common schools, and he convinced Supervisor Hewett that such a move would be practical in the Bloomfield schools. Mr. Hewett has called a meeting of the school board, and a vote has been taken to employ a man versed and competent in this style of work.

"At present, we regret to say that public sentiment seems strongly opposed to Frank Merriwell's school and his methods. At the start, Merriwell entered into this thing as if he intended to run it as a purely philanthropic institution, supported and sustained by himself. No money was to be demanded for tuition from the pupils entered. They were to be recommended by influential men, and accepted as worthy objects of charity by Merriwell's examining board. It is now known, however, that Merriwell expects liberal contributions from wealthy men, whom he has endeavored to interest in his magnificent project. And right here is the nigger in the wood-pile. It will be a fine thing if Mr. Merriwell can induce wealthy citizens of our country to fork over thousands of dollars for him to spend as he sees fit. Yes, it will be a very fine thing—for him. In the meantime, we'll wait, and see how long it takes him to run his great school into the ground."

Frank Merriwell smiled when he finished perusing this article. Friends who saw it asked him if he would answer it.

"Yes, I shall answer it," he nodded; "but not through the newspapers. I'll answer it right here with my school. If I fizzle, as this brilliant chap prophesies, that will be one sort of an answer. If I succeed—well, that will be another kind of an answer."

Frank continued about his business, as if the thought of failure did not trouble him in the least.

During the first few days after losing Courtney and Roberts, Merry was kept extremely busy, for he took on his own shoulders the burden of performing the tasks of these two departed assistants. When Merry did a thing, he never slighted it. If the boys fancied they would be neglected, or given an easy time until new instructors could be secured, they soon discovered their mistake. Merriwell actually performed the work of many men. He drilled the different classes, and he looked after each lad needing individual attention. During working hours, he found scarcely a moment to pause for a restful breath.

In the matter of wrestling and boxing, the boys soon discovered that Charles Courtney was a tyro, in comparison to Frank Merriwell. Not only that, but

Merriwell had the faculty of imparting knowledge—in teaching others so that they grasped his ideas quickly and carried them into execution.

As a swimmer, few men in the world excelled Frank.

It is a peculiar thing that almost all animals, save man, swim naturally the first time they find themselves in the water. Man alone has to learn the art by laborious effort. A few beginners learn quickly and with comparative ease. Others find it difficult to get the knack of keeping afloat. Still others, even though they faithfully endeavor to follow instructions, come, after a time, to be discouraged, and believe it impossible for them to learn at all.

The great trouble with those who fail to grasp the knack of swimming is lack of confidence. They are unable to surrender themselves to the yielding embrace of the water. The moment they do surrender, and their heads go under, they are seized by a feeling of panic, and immediately attempt to rise as high as possible in the water. To swim with the greatest ease, one's body must lie just beneath the surface of the water, with his chin submerged to the lips. As long as his nose is above the surface he may breathe. If he tries to swim with his head and shoulders held high, the effort becomes difficult and tiresome. An expert may swim in this manner, but he seldom does.

Among the boys learning to swim, there were two or three who grew excited and nervous every time they entered the water. Merry took them in hand, and talked to them in a way that quieted their nerves and gave them confidence. In truth, he seemed to impart to each one a portion of his own absolute fearlessness. As a result, one after another learned to surrender themselves to the buoyant liquid, sinking low and sustaining themselves momentarily by the gentle movements of their hands and feet.

Once a person has found that the water will actually buoy him up if he surrenders himself to it, his confidence grows rapidly, and after that the task of learning to swim becomes comparatively easy.

Each night Merry found Inza waiting to greet him with a smile and a kiss, and encourage him with words of praise or advice. They talked over the affairs of the school, and he found many of her ideas worth considering and adopting.

"Well," he said one night, as he flung himself wearily into the enfolding embrace of an easy chair, "even though the prophecies of my enemies should come true, and my school prove a failure, I've done some good. I've led the school board of Bloomfield to employ a physical instructor and introduce calis-

thenics into the schools of the town. It's probable that Deacon Hewett fancied he was rapping me when he urged the board to take such an action, but, in fact, he was acknowledging that such physical training is actually needed in the public schools. It was really a triumph for me. I understand his instructor arrived to-day."

"Oh!" exclaimed Inza. "Who is he? Do you know anything about him, Frank?"

"I've heard of him. His name is Batterby."

"Batterby?"

"Yes, Martin Batterby. He has given exhibitions in various parts of the country as a strong man. At one time, he had a standing challenge against Sandow."

"What sort of a man is he? What's his character, Frank?"

Merry shrugged his shoulders.

"Of course I don't know a great deal concerning him, but he has been in the ring."

"The ring?"

"Yes, the prize-ring."

"Oh, he's a pugilist?"

"Yes, he has done some fighting."

"Does he really know anything about scientific physical culture?"

"That remains to be seen. At any rate, I am not going to condemn him until I find out what he can do. I hope he's an efficient man. I expect my new wrestling and boxing master within a day or two. My swimming instructor will be here to-morrow."

"I'm so glad!" cried Inza. "You're working yourself to death."

"Oh, not a bit of it," he laughed. "Hard work of the sort a man likes seldom kills him, and I like this work. I've found my correspondence piling up on me until it's become a burden, and I've employed a stenographer. Oh, I'll have things running smoothly in a short time now. You understand I've employed these two new assistants as temporary helpers. I may keep them, but both men understand that, in all probability, they will not remain with me long. I pay them well, in order to get them under such circumstances."

"But if they both prove efficient, you'll keep them, won't you?"

"I may not."

"Why not?"

"I have another idea in my mind, Inza. I want men who are not only competent for the places, but who will take the same interest in the work that I do. It's difficult to get such men. I have in mind two chaps who would take hold of the work with interest and en-

thusiasm equal to my own, if I could induce them to take it at all. You know them both, Inza."

"Oh, do I? Who are they?"

"Well, as a wrestling and boxing instructor, I've been thinking of a big, lazy, good-natured chap by the name of Bruce Browning."

Inza uttered an exclamation of delight, clapping her hands.

"Dear old Bruce!" she cried. "Wouldn't that be splendid? Do you suppose he'd do it?"

"Well, that's the question. I've written him about it, urging him to accept the position."

"And who's the other?" breathlessly questioned Frank's wife.

"Jack Diamond. He can swim like a fish, and I'm certain he could teach others."

"Jack?" questioned Inza. "Why, he's in England, Frank."

"I know it."

"You might get Bart Hodge. Isn't he a good swimmer?"

"A splendid swimmer," nodded Merry; "but I do not believe Bart has the temperament and patience to become a good teacher. He's not adapted to such work. I should hate to get him into it, and not be able to keep him. If I can get Diamond, I shall have the very man for the place. I wrote him immediately after Roberts left. I did think of cabling, but I couldn't very well explain everything as fully as I wished by cable. Now, Inza, you understand why Cameron and Farthing, my new assistants, may not remain with me permanently, even though they prove satisfactory and efficient. If Diamond and Browning come here, they will take hold of the work with the same interest that I do. I'll be able to trust them to any extent. If my mining business should call me away for a time, they would see that the school went on properly. I would have no cause to worry about matters here. I hope they come."

"I hope they come!" echoed Inza.

CHAPTER XI.

FRANK'S VISITORS.

As Merry was leaving the house, the following morning, Toots waylaid him.

"Ah say, Massa Frank," called the colored boy, "Ah wan' to speak wif yo'. Scuse me! Ah'ze gut something mighty 'portant to sugges' to yo'."

"All right, Toots," nodded Merry. "What's your suggestion?"

"Yo' see, it's dis way, massa. Ah'ze gut a friend dat's a mighty strong nigger. Bah golly! he's de stronges' colored man Ah eber seen. Ah'ze been tellin' him 'bout mah job heah, an' he took it into his hade he'd like to work fo' you, too. Didn't send me no word, nor nuffin', but he jes' come right ober heah, an' Ah'ze gut him right out in de stable. Now, if yo' wan' some kind of a physicum instructor to do de strong act in yo' school, my friend Jumbo is jes' de man yo' wan'."

Merry laughed heartily.

"I'm afraid your friend has applied a little too late for the position," he said good-naturedly. "All the places are filled."

"Well, now, dat's sholy a shame!" said Toots. "Dat boy Jumbo would make yo' a mighty fine physicum instructor, sah. Don' s'pose dar's nuffin' he can do 'bout de place, is dar?"

"Why, possibly I might find something for him to do. Is he handy with a broom?"

"Do yo' mean is he a good sweeper, sah? Bah golly! he's de fines' yo' eber see."

"Well, I'm in need of an assistant janitor. The young fellow I have can't attend to all the work. Send your friend over to the academy, and let him come to the basement door of Farnham Hall. The regular janitor will be there, and I think we can set Jumbo to work."

"Ah'ze mighty much obleeged to yo', sah," bowed Toots. "If Jumbo can't be a physicum instructor, he'll be pleased to git de position ob assistant janitor. Yes, sah. Thank yo', sah. Scuse me!"

Frank had forgotten about Jumbo when, later in the forenoon, he was hurrying from one department to another. Suddenly he encountered a burly black man, who instantly doffed his cap, exposing two mighty rows of massive teeth in a broad grin.

"Ah wants to thank yo', sah, fo' de position," said the darky deferentially. "Dis am de fust time Ah eber was in a college, an' Ah beliebe Ah'll take de full course. It's a mighty swell thing fo' a pusson to say he's been through college. Yas, sah."

"So you're Jumbo, are you?" said Merry. "You seem to be well named. I believe Toots told me you're very strong."

"Ah'm so strong, sah, dat Ah actually ache wif strength, at times. If yo' hab a safe dat yo' wants put up to de top story, Ah'll jes' lift it onto mah shoulder, an' trot up wif it."

"Well, we haven't any job of that kind for you just now. You can work off your superfluous energy by

keeping things clean. Now, I hope you're a good cleaner, Jumbo."

"Yah, sah, Ah'ze de fines' in de country. Ah worked mos' two year fo' a lady from Mass'chusetts, an', bah golly! she was de mos' perticklar woman 'bout a speck ob dirt Ah eber seed. If dar was jes' a leetle, teenty mite on de bannister, she jes' had a conniption fit, sah. If dar happened to be a grain ob dus' in de corner, she mighty nigh fainted away. When Ah gut through workin' fo' dat woman, sah, Ah was a reformed nigger. When Ah hired wif her Ah didn't know what dirt was, but, by golly! Ah found out befo' Ah retired from dat lady's employ."

"You're all right if you've learned your lesson as well as that," nodded Frank. "What wages do you expect?"

"Well, mebbe Ah'll be a leetle high fo' yo', sah, but Ah'ze suttinly gwine to be wuth it. Ah'll spect a purty good salary. Ah wan' 'bout fo' dol's a month an' mah keeps."

"I'll give you five and your keeps," smiled Frank, as he passed on, leaving Jumbo with every tooth in his head gleaming.

"Bah gracious!" muttered the colored man, "dis am de fines' job Ah eber had. Ah gits a raise befo' Ah commences to work. Say, Ah'll bet anybody mah fust month's salary dat Ah makes good on dis job. Right heah's whar Ah gits to work an' shows what Ah ken do."

Frank had found his new stenographer waiting for him in his office, whither she had been escorted by the janitor. It did not take him three minutes to set her at work. He tested her capacity by dictating a dozen letters at a high rate of speed, leaving her to transcribe them. Later he returned and found the work neatly done and satisfactory.

At noon both Robert Cameron, the new wrestling and boxing master, and Thomas Farthing, the swimming instructor engaged to fill Roberts' place, put in an appearance. Cameron was a man of about thirty, who seemed to be rather clean-cut, while Farthing was a youth barely out of his teens.

"So you both came on the same train, did you, gentlemen?" said Frank. "You came together?"

"Yes," nodded Cameron; "but we didn't get acquainted on the train. Neither of us knew the other was coming here until we stepped off at the station. What kind of a town is this?"

"Why?"

"There seemed to be an unusual number of loafers around the station for a village of this size. As soon

as we left the train some of the crowd began to nudge one another and make comments about us. I heard them saying we must be the new men employed by you. One or two rather rough-looking individuals made sneering remarks."

"That's right," said Farthing. "They got me hot. I felt like punching somebody."

"I hope you didn't betray that you were annoyed," said Merry. "I have some enemies in town, who are doing all they can to make trouble for me. It is my policy to ignore them."

"I thought something was wrong," declared Cameron. "One thin, wizened old chap they called deacon was bold enough to ask us if we were coming here to enter your employ. We both acknowledged that we were. Then he advised us to get onto the train and move out of town. He told us we'd be sorry if we remained here."

"That must have been my particular pet enemy, Deacon Hewett," nodded Merry. "The deacon is at the bottom of the adverse sentiment against me and this school. I'll have to discover a way to teach him a lesson. He's supervisor of the public schools in this town, and he seems to think that he can interfere with a private institution of this sort."

Merry had no more to say about his enemies or his troubles, but proceeded as soon as possible to give Cameron and Farthing instructions for their work, and they took up their duties that afternoon.

It was mid-afternoon, and Frank was trying to clean up his correspondence by dictating in his private office, when Jumbo knocked on the door and announced three visitors.

"Tell them I will see them in about twenty minutes," directed Merry.

"Hold on!" cried a rasping voice, "you're going to see us right now! Our business is important, and our time is valuable!"

The speaker was Deacon Hewett.

Jumbo blocked the doorway.

"Ah specs yo'll suttinly hab to wait twenty minutes, gemmuns," he said.

"Hold on," said Merry, his eyes flashing. "I've changed my mind. Admit them, Jumbo."

"Yas, sah. Jes' as you say, sah. But they nebber'd walked in 'less you said fo' them to. Mah muscles am painin' me dreffully to-day."

Into the office walked the deacon and his two companions. The one at Hewett's heels Merriwell had seen before. He was a short, smooth-faced man of thirty, wearing a derby hat and a cutaway coat. This

man was Hobson Dobbs, a lawyer, well known in Bloomfield and the surrounding country as a sharp practitioner and something of a shyster.

Behind this man came a broad-shouldered, thick-necked individual, who wore a checked suit and a silk hat. He had a mustache and a very square jaw, which seemed to protrude bulldogishly.

In a moment, although he had never seen this person before, Merry knew he was Martin Batterby, the new physical instructor for the schools of the town.

That first glance also settled Merriwell's opinion on another point. Instinctively he realized that Batterby had been employed by Hewett on account of his fighting ability, more than for his knowledge of scientific calisthenics.

Merriwell scented trouble.

Jumbo lingered outside the door.

"If yo' needs me, sah," he said significantly, "Ah'll be right 'round, sah."

"I don't think I'll need you," said Frank.

"Bery well, bery well," muttered the darky, with an intonation of disappointment.

Having closed the door, Jumbo continued to mutter:

"Mebbe yo' t'ink yo' won't need me, but, bah gracious! Ah'ze gwine to be on hand if yo' do. Ah'd jes' gib 'bout two hundred per cent. ob mah monthly wages to reliebe some ob dis pain dat's troublin' me in mah muscles."

Merriwell stood beside his desk and surveyed the visitors.

"You've gut a mighty slick place here, ain't ye?" sneered Deacon Hewett, looking round with a scornful air. "You've spent a lot of money fittin' it up, ain't ye? You've wasted a lot of money foolishly."

"Gentlemen," said Frank, "there's a lady present. Would you kindly remove your hats?"

"A lady?" muttered Lawyer Dobbs. "She's a stenographer! We don't have to take off our hats when we go into a business office where there's a stenographer."

Merriwell tingled to put his hands on the little shyster, but refrained from showing a trace of anger as he observed:

"It's evident I made a mistake when I addressed you as gentlemen. Miss Pierce, I trust you overlook their lack of common decency."

"Now what do you think of that, what do you think of that?" rasped Elnathan Hewett, giving Batterby a nudge with his elbow.

"Oh, he's due to get his, all right!" growled Batterby.

"You're a very uppish young man, Merriwell!" sneered Dobbs.

"You'd better drop that sort of talk instantly!" flung back Frank. "State your business and state it at once!"

"We will state our business!" shouted Batterby, flourishing a hamlike fist. "Our business is to tell you that your School of Athletic Development is a fraud and you're a fakir!"

CHAPTER XII.

THE VISITORS DEPART HURRIEDLY.

"In other words," said Frank calmly, "you propose to make it your business to interfere with my business."

"Yes, that's it!" roared Batterby. "No, that isn't it either! We're going to show you up!"

"I see," nodded Merry, "you're going to show yourselves up."

"Yes, we're going to show ourselves up!" cried the pugilist. "Here! here! what are you saying? We're not going to show ourselves up; we're going to show you up!"

"You seem to be laboring under a slight misapprehension," said Frank. "I'm not deaf. You don't have to shout in order to make me hear."

"Perhaps you don't know me!" rasped Batterby. "Perhaps you don't know who I am!"

"It's possible I don't want to."

"I'm a physical instructor myself. I have taught in the public schools. I'm a school-teacher."

"You're a fool teacher?"

"Yes, sir, I'm a fool teacher. No, I'm not! What do you mean by saying that? Are you trying to insult me?"

"I wouldn't insult you for the world," said Merry soothingly. "I'd be very careful about that."

"You'd be very careful, hey? Well, you'd better be careful! You'd better not insult me!"

"I couldn't insult you if I tried."

"That's right, you couldn't insult me if you tried! Now stop that! Don't be putting words into my mouth that I don't intend to speak! You're trying to make a spectacle of me!"

"You're making a spectacle of yourself."

"I'm a gentleman, sir! Am I not?"

"Yes, you're a gentleman—not!"

"Now jest wait a minute," cut in Deacon Hewett. "When I'm through with this young man you can say

anything you want to say to him, Mr. Batterby. Mr. Merriwell, I s'spose you understand I'm the public supervisor of schools. It's my business to look after the schools in this town and see that everything is run proper and correct in them. If things is wrong, if the schools ain't up to the standard, if I don't approve of the way they're being run, I ken shet them up, by ginger! Now, sir, I've taken pains to find out all about your school here, and I'm satisfied it's a fraud. You're gittin' together a whole lot of sickly boys and deludin' them into the idee that you're goin' to make them strong and healthy. Be you a doctor? Answer that question! Be you a doctor?"

"I'm not a doctor of medicine," answered Merry; "but I presume you are aware that I have an eminent German doctor at this school, whose business it is to——"

"Fiddlesticks on your eminent German doctor!" interrupted Elnathan, waving his long arms. "I say fiddlesticks on him! As I was jest a-tellin', you're gittin' together a whole lot of sick boys here in this town, and they're becoming a menace to the health of the whole community. You're making this school a nuisance. Being supervisor of schools, I propose to supervise this one. I'm going to shet it up! I'm going to close this school, and I want you to understand it!"

"You interest me very much, Mr. Hewett," said Frank. "I wonder how you're going about it?"

"I'm here to give ye my orders! I'm here to order you to close this school immediately! You want to understand, by jingoes! that I have authority to give orders!"

"Let's see if you have, Mr. Hewett. You're appointed by the citizens of this town to act as supervisor of the public schools. Your superiors are on the school board of the State. This institution is a private school, Mr. Hewett. Neither the town of Bloomfield nor the State in which the town of Bloomfield lies contributes one dollar toward the support of this school. Therefore, sir, neither you nor any member of the State Board has an atom of authority to come here and give orders to me. You're interfering with my business just at present and taking up a great deal of my valuable time. Having stated your business with me and having received your answer, you will oblige me by departing."

"Hold on a minute," put in Lawyer Dobbs. "You've heard from these gentlemen, and now you'll hear from me. As Deacon Hewett has informed you, you are collecting a lot of unhealthy boys here in this town, and, therefore, your school becomes a menace

to the health of the community. Not only that, but these boys are permitted to roam about over the country, under the pretense of learning to travel on snowshoes or something of that sort. As soon as the snow is off they'll be makin' cross-country runs and playing hare and hounds and cutting up similar capers. They're a menace to the health and peace of the community. Therefore, sir, your school is a public nuisance, and as such I shall move against it in behalf of the town, complaint having been made by Deacon Hewett and several other prominent citizens. You'll find yourself up against the law, sir—up against the law!"

"Have you finished?" questioned Merry.

"Yes, I've finished, but I want you to understand that I mean every word I've said! We're going to put an end to this disgraceful thing you call a school!"

"Now, Mr. Dobbs; you may go. Hurry right away, sir, and get into action as soon as you can. In the meantime, I'll take pleasure in investigating your record and your career. You've been able to cover up much of your crookedness, although at one time there was danger that you would be debarred and forbidden to practise your profession. Had Frederick Waterby seen fit to follow the matter up in regard to the divorce which you procured for his wife, you would be behind prison-bars to-day for perjury. Had the Potter heirs not been frightened out of it, had they possessed sufficient money to secure competent counsel, both Elnathan Hewett, who misappropriated the Potter fortune, and you, who assisted him in this reprehensible work, would now be doing time in the State penitentiary. I'm not in the habit of speaking of my financial standing, but I assure you I am not exactly a poor man. I have sufficient money to enable me, if I see fit, to take hold of either one of these cases and carry them to a finish. Waterby has declined to appear against you. He may be compelled to do so. He may be compelled to go on the stand and testify just how much money he received through you if he would not prosecute you for perjury. All the Potter heirs need is some one to offer financial backing and encourage them in bringing suit. I shall take great pleasure in giving them all the encouragement in my power."

While Merry was speaking both Hewett and Dobbs betrayed agitation. The deacon became very nervous, and the lawyer turned pale, although he tried to sneer and maintain a derisive air.

Frank stepped quickly to the office door and flung it wide open. Pointing toward the door he sternly commanded:

"Go!"

"All right, all right," mumbled Hewett, who seemed somewhat cowed, "we'll go."

"Yes, we'll go," nodded Dobbs; "but we're not frightened."

"Say," roared Batterby, "I want you to understand I'm in no hurry about going! This feller can't talk to me nor my friends in no such manner as this! If he does, I'm liable to fan him a bit."

Batterby advanced on Frank as he said this, and thrust his huge fist under Merriwell's nose.

An instant later something happened to Mr. Batterby. Quick as a flash of lightning, Merriwell swept the threatening fist aside. He seized the man by the collar, and, before Batterby realized it, he was running through the office door toward the head of the stairs beyond. The toe of Merriwell's right foot struck the pugilistic physical instructor about seven inches below the back-strap of the gentleman's trousers. Batterby was sent through the air as if he had been hit by a battering-ram. With a terrible thud he landed half-way down the stairs, and went bouncing and bumping the rest of the way to the bottom.

Now it happened that Jumbo was lingering near the foot of those stairs, and Jumbo's muscles were paining him.

"'Scuse me!" cried the darky, as he pounced on the bewildered Batterby and yanked him to his feet. "Yo' seem to be in a drefful hurry, sah. Right dis way out, sah."

Almost before Batterby could catch his breath, he was swished toward the door. Jumbo handled the man as if he were a featherweight.

"Allus gibs me great pleasure to 'sist any pusson in a great hurry," said the darky, as he flung the pugilist out onto the steps and then kicked him headlong to the walk.

Both Hewett and Dobbs had been astounded by the manner in which Frank disposed of Batterby.

"Don't put your hands on me!" rasped Elnathan, as he rushed for the stairs.

"Don't interfere with the majesty of the law!" palpitated Dobbs, as he hurried after Hewett.

Jumbo heard them as they came clattering down the stairs. Back to the foot of the stairs went the darky.

"Dis way out, gemmans," he chuckled, as he made a grab at Hewett.

The deacon was lifted like a feather, and his feet did not again touch the floor until the front door was reached. At that point they touched barely a moment.

Then once more Jumbo's heavy boot aided a visitor to depart. Hewett went flying on top of Batterby, who had started to rise, and both sprawled in a heap.

"Murder!" cried Dobbs, as he tried to dodge past the huge colored man.

"'Scuse me!" muttered Jumbo, and his foot propelled the lawyer as it had previously propelled his two companions.

"Now, gemmans," said the darky, as he stepped outside and stood with his arms akimbo, "dat's de nearest way to de road. Ah'ze mighty glad ob a chance to 'sist yo' when yo' was in such a hurry. If yo' need any mo' 'sistance, Ah'll suttinly take pleasure in gibbin' it to ye."

Evidently none of the three fancied he needed further assistance, for all made haste to rise and take flight in the most comical manner.

"Yah! yah!" laughed Jumbo. "Dem gemmans am suttinly in a drefful hurry."

Merriwell stood at the head of the stairs.

"Thank you, Jumbo," he said, as the colored man reentered the lower hall.

"Don' mention it, sah," grinned the darky. "Ah'ze mighty glad to hab an opportunity to reliebe de pain in mah muscles. Ah'ze feelin' a great deal better, sah. Yas, sah. Thank yo'."

CHAPTER XIII.

FROM THE FLAMES.

Half-an-hour later three disconsolate, disgusted men sat in Lawyer Dobbs' dingy little office. Dobbs' face was red with rage as he scowlingly puffed at a black cigar. Hewett sat on a chair, with his knees together and his feet apart, staring at a crack in the floor. Batterby sat astride another chair, his ruffled silk hat on the back of his head, bursting into occasional fits of profanity.

"Don't swear, man—don't swear!" the deacon finally snapped. "I don't like it! I'm a church-member."

"Oh, to blazes with that!" rumbled the pugilist. "I'm thinking of that nigger. I'm thinking what I'll do to him when I get a chance."

"You didn't do much to Merriwell," reminded Hewett. "Why, I thought you was a great fighter! You let him run you out of his office and kick you down-stairs, jest as if you was a ten-year-old boy. What am I hirin' you for, man? What did you say you'd do to him when we went there? You said all you wanted him to do was jest try to put a hand on ye. If he done that, you said you'd wipe up the floor

with him. Yah-h! I'm lame now where that nigger kicked me!"

"That's it! that's it!" declared Batterby. "It wasn't Merriwell; it was the nigger. Come now, gentlemen, are we going to stand for this? You made a lot of talk about putting the law to Merriwell, Mr. Hewett. Now's your chance. You can sue him for assault and battery."

"I dunno 'bout the law," muttered Elnathan, casting a dubious and questioning eye toward Dobbs. "What do you think, squire?"

"Are you asking for my legal advice?" demanded Dobbs.

"Now hold on—hold on, squire! Don't you go to chargin' me for legal advice! We're all in this business. He threatened you jest as much as he did me."

"Well, to give you my honest opinion, I doubt if we can do much of anything with him through the courts. He seems to be a pretty nasty chap when he's stirred up. If we did institute proceedings against him, perhaps he'd keep his threat to probe certain matters that we don't care to have probed."

"That's what I was thinkin'," groaned the deacon. "As fur's law's consarned, it seems to me that he's gut us on the hip. But I engaged Batterby 'specially to make it hot for that feller. Batterby, you're no good!"

"You wait and see!" growled the pugilist. "I'll show you!"

"What'll you do?"

"Wait and see!" repeated Batterby. "I'll lay for him. When I meet him in public some time, I'll talk to him so that he'll have to make an offensive move. Then I'll jump on him and beat him up."

"All right, all right," nodded the deacon. "If you do that, you can hold your job here in the public schools; but if you don't do it, I won't need you as a physical instructor. I guess that's plain enough for you."

Batterby rose with a great show of wrath and proceeded to make all sorts of threats against Frank Merriwell. This talk seemed to relieve the feelings of his companions to some extent, and it was finally decided that no further move should be made until the pugilist had carried out his promises.

For two or three days after this Martin Batterby swaggered about town, telling people what would happen when he encountered Frank. As a result, all Bloomfield seemed waiting impatiently for that encounter.

But one morning the people of the little town awoke to find that Martin Batterby had quietly departed some

time during the night, and thereafter for many weeks the schools of the town were without the services of a physical instructor.

In the meantime, Merry went about his business as if nothing of a disturbing nature had occurred. His school was visited by several prominent citizens of the State, including a State Senator and United States Congressman. Without exception, these visitors commended Frank's work and departed to praise him unstintedly.

The State Senator wrote a letter to the *Wellsburg Herald*, in which he gave his opinion of the American School of Athletic Development. This letter, however, was suppressed for the time being.

A day or two later an interview with the congressman appeared in a prominent New York paper. In this interview the congressman declared that Merriwell's school was a grand philanthropic institution, deserving the support, both morally and financially, of all who were interested in the welfare of the rising generation. Merriwell was spoken of in terms of almost lavish praise.

Following this, the next issue of the *Wellsburg Herald* published the letter from the State Senator, prefacing it with a statement that it had been overlooked, although it reached the office in time to appear at a much earlier date. In Bloomfield the tide of public sentiment began to turn, and gradually the townspeople awoke to the fact that, far from being something of which they should feel shame, Merriwell's school was a thing in which they could take real pride.

Elnathan Hewett grew more sour each day.

One evening, as the deacon was reading his newspaper, Mrs. Hewett being out to call on a neighbor across the way, there came a sharp knock on the door.

"Now who's that?" growled Hewett, removing his spectacles and picking up the lamp. "Who's coming round to bother me to-night? I don't want to see nobody!"

When he opened the door, a man pushed into the hall.

"Hold on!" commanded the deacon. "Who be you? and what do you want?"

"Close the door," said the man, and proceeded to close it himself. "You know me, deacon."

He turned down the collar of his overcoat, and Hewett gave a start.

"Great ginger!" he cried. "It's Courtney! What be you doin' back here, Courtney? Don't you know better than to come here?"

"Oh, that's all right!" growled the Englishman thickly. "I've come back to find out how you're getting along with Merriwell. I couldn't keep away. I'm dying to get revenge on him! It eats out my heart every day of my life!"

"Man, you're drunk!" cried the deacon.

"I'm not drunk!" denied Courtney. "I'm tired. I can't go to any other place in town. I want to stay here to-night. Now don't turn me out! If you do, you'll make a mistake, deacon! You helped me to get away, and you knew there was a warrant out for my arrest. If I'm arrested now, you'll be in trouble, too. All I want is a bed."

"My gracious! it's a good thing Mirandy isn't here!" muttered Hewett. "She'd never let you stay in this house. You'll have to leave by the first train in the morning. There won't be many folks stirring, and you can get out of town, all right. I hate most mortally to keep you here, but I s'pose I'll have to."

"Yes, you'll have to," said Courtney. "Just show me the bed, and I'll turn in."

Charles Courtney slept in Elnathan Hewett's house that night. He fell asleep with a whisky flask beside him and a lighted cigarette in his mouth.

An hour later the quiet village was startled by the cry of fire. The fire-bell rang, and the villagers made haste to rush forth to the fire.

The burning house proved to be that of Deacon Hewett. The upper part of the house was on fire, but the neighbors entered the lower rooms and brought out the furnishings, while waiting for the village fire-company and hand-tub to arrive.

Like the average volunteer fire-company of a small village, that of Bloomfield was amazingly slow in its movements.

"They'll never save the deacon's house!" exclaimed a woman. "Just look! The whole upper story is afire!"

"I suppose everybody got out, all right?" questioned another woman.

"Oh, yes, the deacon and Mrs. Hewett have been helping to bring out the furniture. There's their hired man. He's been working like a tiger. The deacon's in an awful state of mind. He ain't got no insurance."

"He's too mean to pay for insurance!" cried a boy.

"Who's that young man that's been helpin' bring out the stuff?" asked one of the women.

"Don't you know him?" demanded the boy. "Why, that's Frank Merriwell."

At this moment a sudden shout of astonishment and horror burst from the spectators.

"Look! look!" they cried. "There's somebody in the house now!"

A human figure in nightclothes had appeared at one of the upper windows, plainly seen for a moment in the glare of the fire.

"Who is it?"

"Goodness knows!"

"He'll have to jump!"

"If he don't, he'll be burned to death!"

"Where's a ladder?"

"Bring a ladder, somebody!"

"He's gone!"

"He's gone! he's gone!"

A great cloud of smoke had enfolded the figure at the window. When the smoke was swept away the figure had vanished.

It had been seen by Merriwell. Frank knew the unknown man had been overcome by smoke. He believed the man had fallen just inside the window at which he had been seen. Merry rushed to some men who were awkwardly bringing a ladder round the corner. He flung several of them aside, and, assisted only by a huge colored man, whom he called Jumbo, he hastened with the ladder to a point directly beneath the window at which the man had been seen.

"Show your muscle, Jumbo!" he cried. "Put that ladder in place! Put it up to that window!"

"Yas, sah," said Jumbo, as he swung the ladder into the air as if it were a toothpick. "Dar she am, sah."

"Hold it," directed Frank.

Up the ladder he went. With his foot he smashed the window, and then he sprang into the room. A moment later he reappeared, with a human form dangling over his shoulder.

The villagers cheered lustily as Merriwell descended the ladder, bearing his unconscious enemy, Charles Courtney.

* * * * *

For three days Courtney was delirious. At no time was he violent, but through it all his mind wandered, and he talked wildly of Frank Merriwell, seeming to fancy that he was tied to a stake and Merriwell was piling burning wood and brush about him.

Through all this the man was cared for by two competent nurses and a doctor who never left the house. Finally, after a deep sleep, Courtney awoke and found the doctor at the bedside.

"What has happened?" he muttered. "The fire! I seem to remember a fire all around me! I was smothering!"

"You're all right now," assured the physician. "You were discovered barely in time. Deacon Hewett's house burned. They say the fire must have been caused by you. You were smoking in bed."

"That's true," muttered Courtney. "I think I did smoke. How did I get out?"

"They saw you in the window. A ladder was placed at that window, and a man brought you out."

"Who was the man?"

"Frank Merriwell."

Courtney caught his breath and lay staring at the doctor for a long time.

"Where am I now?" he finally asked.

"You're in Merriwell's house. He had you brought here, and he has kept me to watch over you during the three days that you have been out of your mind."

Charles Courtney turned his face toward the wall and asked no more questions.

An hour later, as the golden rays of the setting sun entered the chamber window and fell across that bed, Courtney turned and spoke again.

"I want to see Merriwell," he said.

In time Frank came and stood looking down at the unfortunate Englishman.

"Well, Courtney," he said kindly, "the doctor tells me you'll come out of it all right. It was a close call for you."

At first, when Courtney tried to speak, something rose in his throat and choked him so that he could not utter a word. After a time he faintly muttered:

"You saved me from the fire, Merriwell. I suppose now you will send me to prison?"

"No, Courtney. I have talked it over with Mrs. Merriwell. She thinks—and I agree with her—that you have been punished enough. You may remain here until you wholly recover, and then you will be at liberty to depart."

Again Courtney tried to speak, but now the bunch in his throat broke into sobs which he could not repress. Weakly taking Frank's hand, he carried it to his lips.

THE END.

The Next Number (514) Will Contain FRANK MERRIWELL'S PUPILS;

OR,

The Wizards at Water Polo.

A Soured Soul—Mrs. Hewett Has Her Way—The Cavalier and the Sailors—Captain Bowline's Plot—The Quarrel—The Unmasking—Cross-Purposes and Troubled Hearts—New Partners—An Interrupted Fight—In the Swimming Tank—Choosing the Athletic Committee—Deacon Hewett's Threat—The Deacon is Converted, and Baptized.

Beware of cheap imitations of the Tip Top Weekly. Frank and Dick Merriwell and their friends appear only in the pages of Tip Top. BURT L. STANDISH writes exclusively for Tip Top and has been the author of the ONLY and ORIGINAL Merriwell stories for over nine years.

About the Early Numbers of **Tip Top Weekly**

We receive hundreds of letters every week from readers asking if we can supply the early numbers of Tip Top containing Frank's adventures. In every case we are obliged to reply that numbers 1 to 300 are entirely out of print.

We would like to call the attention of our readers to the fact that the Frank Merriwell Stories now being published in book form in the Medal Library are inclusive of these early numbers. The first book to appear was No. 150 entitled "Frank Merriwell's Schooldays."

We give herewith a complete list of all the stories that have been published in book form up to the time of writing. We will be glad to send a fine colored cover catalogue of the Medal Library which is just filled with good things for boys, upon receipt of a one-cent stamp to cover postage.

The Price of The Merriwell Books is Ten Cents per Copy. At all Newsdealers

Frank Merriwell at Yale.	Medal No. 205.	10c.
Frank Merriwell Down South.	Medal No. 189.	10c.
Frank Merriwell in Camp.	Medal No. 253.	10c.
Frank Merriwell in England.	Medal No. 340.	10c.
Frank Merriwell in Europe.	Medal No. 201.	10c.
Frank Merriwell in Maine.	Medal No. 276.	10c.
Frank Merriwell on the Road.	Medal No. 300.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Athletes.	Medal No. 233.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Bicycle Tour.	Medal No. 217.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Book of Physical Development.		
Diamond Hand-Book	No. 6.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Bravery.	Medal No. 193.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Champions.	Medal No. 240.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Chase.	Medal No. 271.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Chums.	Medal No. 167.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's College Chums.	Medal No. 312.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Courage.	Medal No. 225.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Cruise.	Medal No. 267.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Danger.	Medal No. 251.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Daring.	Medal No. 229.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Fame.	Medal No. 308.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's First Job.	Medal No. 284.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Fees.	Medal No. 178.	10c.
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Frank Merriwell's Great Scheme.	Medal No. 836.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Hard Luck.	Medal No. 292.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Hunting Tour.	Medal No. 197.	10c.
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Frank Merriwell's Presprity.	Medal No. 328.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Protege.	Medal No. 296.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Races.	Medal No. 213.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Return to Yale.	Medal No. 244.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's School-Days.	Medal No. 150.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Secret.	Medal No. 247.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Skill.	Medal No. 237.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Sports Afield.	Medal No. 209.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Stage Hit.	Medal No. 332.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Struggle.	Medal No. 280.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Trip West.	Medal No. 184.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Vacation.	Medal No. 262.	10c.

BOYS!

BOYS!

BOYS!

TIP TOP

FREE POST CARDS!

AT the present time over one hundred thousand copies of "TIP TOP" are sold throughout the United States every week! There are many good reasons why boys like "TIP TOP" better than any other five cent weekly publication. Why do YOU like it?

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These cards are illustrations of Frank Merriwell, Brad Buckhart, Obediah Tubbs, Joe Crowfoot, Dick Merriwell, and Cap'n Wiley.

They are printed in many colors and will be a fine addition to any boy's collection of post cards. Write now. They are free.

FRANK
MERRIWELL



STREET & SMITH

PUBLISHERS

NEW YORK



NEW YORK, February 10, 1906.

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STREET & SMITH'S TIP TOP WEEKLY,
79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York City.

TIP TOP ROLL OF HONOR.

Following the suggestion of Mr. Burt L. Standish, that appeared in his letter to Tip Top readers in No. 480, the following loyal Tip Toppers have won for themselves a place on our Honor Roll for their efforts to increase the circulation of the King of Weeklies. Get in line boys and girls and strive to have your name at the head of the list.

Fred F. Blake, 1512 E. 10 St., Kansas City, Mo.
Edward M. Marsh, Pine Island, Minn.
W. G. Whittaker, 1207 Pearl St., Cleveland, O.
Chas. L. Stone, 1131 Pearl St., Cleveland, O.
Raymond Orin, Medina, N. Y.
Thomas Schounour, Womelsdorf, Pa.
C. E. Coberly, Holden, W. Va.
Geo. B. Welsh, 948 North Ave., Allegheny, Pa.
C. F. S., Mexia, Texas.
W. E. H., Worcester, Mass.

The names of other enthusiastic Tip Toppers will be added from time to time. Send in the result of your efforts to push the circulation of your favorite weekly and win a place on the Roll of Honor.

APPLAUSE.

Owing to the number of letters received, the editors of Tip Top cannot undertake to secure their publication under six weeks. Those who contribute to this department must not expect to see them before that time.

I have been a constant reader of Tip Top for six years, and have nearly a complete file of numbers. I have about one hundred and fifty bound into volumes, and many of my friends have read them, thereby making them regular readers of your "king of weeklies."

Two years ago I wrote a letter, which I think reached the waste-basket, but am trying again, and hope this one will escape.

What has become of Hector Marsh? I am interested in him, and wish he would become a decent fellow and a friend of Dick, because we have the same name. Will he appear at Fardale again?

I think June is a lovely girl, and if Dick sticks to her he will be just in luck. Chester should be a decent fellow, if for no other reason than to have that much respect for his sister. I hope that Rioden gets his in a hurry, and the sooner he does the better.

I wish Frank, Dick, and some of the fellows would visit Minnesota to go hunting this year, and incidentally to go up against Minnesota University football team, champions of the West, and the St. Paul lacrosse team, champions of America. I wish all Tip Top readers who are interested in a correspondence club would write to me. I will answer all letters promptly. I would also like to exchange papers with readers. I have over five thousand different ones.

If An Illinois Girl, of Clinton, Ill., and Blue-Eyed Meg, of Hopkins, Minn., will send me their names, I should be pleased to correspond with them. I am now seventeen years old, but will be eighteen by the time this reaches the basket or is printed. Please send me a complete catalogue of all your publications. With three cheers for Tip Top, Frank, Dick, and all their pals, Burt L. Standish and Street & Smith, I am, a loyal Tip Topper, Pine Island, Minn.
EDWARD M. MARSH.

We will mail you a catalogue of our publications at once. Your bound Tip Toppers will make a welcome addition to the family bookcase. You are such an enthusiastic reader that we feel that your name should go on the Roll of Honor. Mr. Standish attends to the various characters, and whether he intends to bring your namesake back to the pages of Tip Top we cannot predict just at this time.

I have just finished reading Tip Top No. 497, which is a very good story; in fact, all of them that I have read are very good, and I have read a good many. I was looking over the letters in the Applause column when I came across the letter which "A Kansas Lassie" wrote, wishing to correspond with any one who wished to write to her. If she should send a letter to the address below, I am sure she would get one in return. Dick and Brad are the boys for me. Wishing Burt L. Standish and Street & Smith luck for many years to come, I am, yours very truly,
HAROLD G. HOYT.

297 New Street, Newark, N. J.

Of course the Tip Toppers you have read are good! And they are getting better every day.

I have heard quite a few people remark that the Applause column in the Tip Top WEEKLY was not genuine, and that the letters printed therein were fictitious, and were only made up to increase the sale of the magazine by the ingenious brain of some one especially appointed to that department. I have doubted the statements I have heard, however, and never having seen a letter in the same department from any one that I know, I thought I would prove conclusively to myself, at any rate, that these accusations were false, by having you print at least a portion of this letter, with my initials, W. E. H., signed at the close. This will settle all dispute, for then I can show these doubting Thomases that they are away off their base in this respect, by simply showing them this letter, printed in your magazine, with my name signed to it.

I have never written to you before, but for nine years I have been an ardent admirer of your splendid book. With the publication of the five-hundredth issue, I shall have a complete library of eighty-four volumes, as I have bound in regular order six magazines to the volume. This library will represent that I have spent twenty-five dollars, but you may rest assured that I never will spend another twenty-five dollars that I can honestly say I have ever derived one-tenth part of the enjoyment that I have from my Frank Merriwell's. Hurrah! I would not take fifty dollars for the set spot cash, if I could not replace it.

There is something about the Tip Top that differs from all other magazines. I beg to be allowed to judge, as I have bought and read hundreds of other books, which I might name, only to find that there is really only one Tip Top and all others are cheap imitations.

Mr. Burt L. Standish is one man among a million, for where can one find a person so well informed as he must be, to write on such a great multitude of subjects, and always keep the interest centered in the grand old Tip Top. The stories of travel, going into detail as they do, the tales of larks and frolics at Fardale and Yale, the contests and different games of such a variety, are all written in a manner that shows the author must have a great deal of knowledge. I have spent hours reading these tales and never tire of them, and as a last resort, I wish to write to you, that you may print, so that others may see what a howling enthusiast I am. I have loaned my books to several friends to read, and where they laughed at me before they now

agree with me, that I know a tip-top thing when I see one, and they all are now buying the Frank Merriwells themselves.

I think that I had better cut this short, as I do not wish to intrude; but, as a favor, if you will only print this letter, I shall be only happy and grateful to you and satisfied that justice has been done.

In closing, I wish that all the Tip Top readers might gather together, and then I think that if we could only shout, with a perfect roar, three cheers and a tiger for Frank and Dick Merriwell, the Tip Top, and Burt L. Standish, we might in a measure feel satisfied with ourselves and the whole wide world in general.

As I stated before, I have my magazines all bound, and wishing to catalogue them, I wish you would please send by mail to the address below three of your Tip Top catalogues. Don't think I am a hog. You see, one catalogue I use for that purpose. The others I cut up in sections and paste on the outside of each volume as a table of contents, and the catalogues are, I expect, printed on both sides of the sheets, so, you see, to get one complete table of contents and have a catalogue besides, I need three catalogues, which please send to the address below, and whatever the cost I will pay it.

WILLIAM E. H.

Worcester, Mass.

If any one doubts the genuineness of the letters appearing in the Applause column let him read this one. It is right "hot off the bat," if we may be permitted to use the expression, and hits the mark. If some of our friends could see the stacks of letters from Tip Top admirers which come in every mail they would cease to wonder where they are written. When it takes six weeks to get around to each letter before it appears in print, it is readily seen how many we receive and why all Tip Top letters are genuine. We should like very much to print W. E. H.'s full name and address, as this particular letter could stand out better before our readers with all its veracity, and enable them to write him if they chose, but as he distinctly requests us to use only his initials, though he has signed his letter not only with his full name but address as well, we feel in honor bound to comply with his request. Your name deserves to go on the Honor Roll, where we will place your initials as a reward for your appreciation of Tip Top.

I have been an interested reader of the Applause column in your Tip Top WEEKLY, and have also noticed your new addition, the "Roll of Honor."

It occurs to me that I have a friend who certainly deserves to appear there, as I myself can testify.

His name is W. G. Whittaker, 1207 Pearl Street, Cleveland, Ohio.

Some time ago Mr. Whittaker bought out an old book-store, securing with his purchase several thousand old Tip Tops. He has since helped many of the readers to complete their files. His enthusiasm regarding the Tip Top WEEKLY is unbounded.

I have handled Street & Smith's publications for years, having been in the news business for the last twenty-five years.

To my knowledge, by his own efforts, my friend has added at least a dozen regular readers to the Tip Top fold.

With my best wishes to Street & Smith and their various publications, I remain, yours very truly,
CHAS. L. STONE.
1131 Pearl Street, Cleveland, Ohio.

We are pleased to act upon your suggestion and put Mr. Whittaker's name on the Roll of Honor. One who has been so earnest in trying to increase the circulation of the library deserves to have this courtesy shown him. May he always enjoy prosperity for the good-will he has shown toward the library. We also appreciate what your hand has done in calling our attention to Mr. Whittaker's efforts. We take pleasure in placing your name directly under his in the Roll of Honor.

As I have been a reader of the Tip Top WEEKLY and many others, I want to say that of all I have read I find the Tip Top the most interesting of them all.

I want to announce a little incident which occurred a few days previous.

A friend called upon me, and as he sat near the stand where I usually keep my papers, he picked up one of the Tip Tops. He looked at it, then at me, then laid it down. He then asked

me if I were in the habit of reading such literature. I said I was. I asked him if he objected to any one's reading them. He said he did. I asked him what reason he had for so doing. "Why, a good many reasons," he said. I asked him to name one. I said: "Did you ever read one?" He said no. Then I said: "How can you talk against a book or paper you never read?" I then had my friend. "Will you let me read a few pages aloud to you?" I asked. "Why, yes," he said. After I had read them to him I asked him if I had read anything that was not fit to read. "No," he said, "but they are not all like that, are they?" I said: "Certainly." I asked him if he would oblige me by taking a few copies home and read them. He said he would. He is now as interested in them as I am. I also want to announce to you that one of the letters I read in No. 497 about young ladies reading them was very good. I say that they have as much right as their brothers. She also spoke of the cowboys. If you would visit my room you will find their pictures on the walls. I wish to give this young lady my best regards and also would like to correspond with her if she will be kind enough to write to me. I will receive her letter with great pleasure. Her name was signed Only a Girl. Wishing good luck to Street & Smith and Frank Merriwell, I remain, still a reader of Tip Top,
ONLY A BOY.
Silver Creek.

You took an effective way of proving to your friend that Tip Top was a weekly he should read as well as other people. There are a great many skeptics in the world who are such only because they never take the trouble to investigate; but when some one, like yourself, shows them what they have missed, they become enthusiastic supporters of that which they were at first inclined to condemn, and for no other reason than that they did not know. A little guidance by a friendly hand will often put us on track of things which we wish had been pointed out to us a long time before. We dare say that your friend is now one of our most loyal Tip Toppers.

Having read your columns for the last two years, and this being my first time to write to you, I wish to express my thanks to Burt L. Standish. His pen has expelled Chet Arlington from dear old Fardale and also that dear old Dick has come back to old Fardale, and I think that there is going to be another Chet Arlington in the person of Mr. Rob Rioden, "Blast 'is heyes," as Billy Bradley says. I read a great many books, but give me Tip Top and I am satisfied every time. I read a letter in your Applause columns signed by a boy called S. C. Ward. He says he likes Chet Arlington and that he should take Brad's place. Nay, nay, Pauline! let Brad stay where he is, and our dear old Burt L. will take care of Chet Arlington. Hope his picture will be in the Rogues Gallery before he is twenty-one weeks older. Would like to correspond with Only a Girl. Hope this will escape his majesty the Waste-basket. With best regards to Street & Smith, Burt L. Standish, and all enthusiastic Tip Toppers, I remain, a Tip Topper forever,
H. J. L.
Philadelphia, Pa.

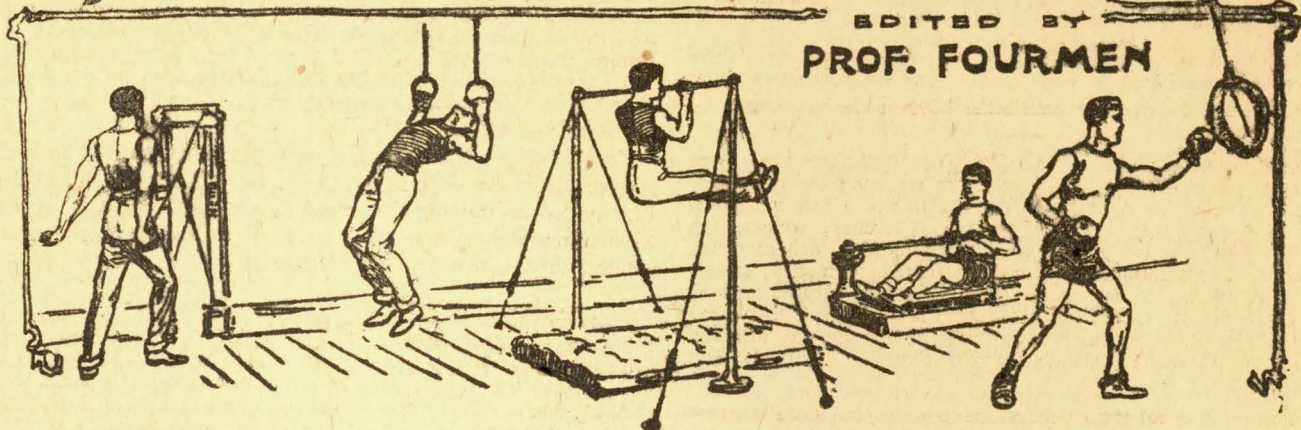
Everybody seems to be glad that Chet Arlington has been expelled from Fardale. He deserved it for all the mean tricks he has been guilty of.

Will you please send me a catalogue of Tip Top? I read your weekly some five or six years ago and have recently commenced again. The stories are superbly written, and I doubt if Mr. Standish has an equal in America in this class of work. The characters, Frank and Dick Merriwell, are splendid ideals for any American boy to follow. I have ambitions of becoming a writer myself some day, and I read the stories from a literary standpoint as well as for amusement. What I wish the catalogue for is to get all the numbers relative to Dick's days at Fardale. Yours truly,
Fulton, Ky.
AN ADMIRER OF B. L. S.

The Tip Top stories are excellent models, and if you study them attentively you will have a vast fund of material to guide you. The effect on character which these stories has is such that thousands of young people have been induced to lead clean, noble lives. That example is better than precept has not been better illustrated than in the way that our readers have taken the Merriwell boys as guides for their conduct. A catalogue of our publications will be mailed you at once.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

EDITED BY
PROF. FOURMEN



PROF. FOURMEN: Having read your weekly for about five years, I take the liberty to send in the measurements of a friend and myself. The measurements of my friend are as follows: Age, 18 years; height, 5 feet 7½ inches; weight, 136 pounds; neck, 14 inches; shoulders, 17 inches; chest, normal, 35 inches; expanded, 38½ inches; waist, 31 inches; thighs, 19½ inches; calf, 14 inches; ankle, 9½ inches; biceps, 12 inches; forearm, 9½ inches; wrist, 7 inches. 1. How are his measurements? 2. And how can they be improved? My own measurements are as follows: Age, 16 years; height, 5 feet 7 inches; weight, 120 pounds; neck, 13½ inches; shoulders, 16 inches; chest, normal, 32 inches; expanded, 35 inches; waist, 30 inches; thighs, 18½ inches; calves, 12½ inches; ankle, 9½ inches; biceps, 10 inches; forearm, 9 inches; wrist, 6½ inches. 1. Are these measurements good or bad, and how can I improve them? 2. Where do I need improvement most? Please answer these questions, and oblige a loyal TIP TOP reader,
Gainsville, Ga. Two WOULD-BE ATHLETES.

Your friend weighs considerably more than you do, yet, at the same time, he is not quite up to the standard. Both should train to take on as much weight as possible, by observing a regular course of living, which includes, of course, twenty minutes' exercise in the morning and again at night, and the eating of only plain, nourishing foods. His chest is of good size, while yours needs bag-punching to deepen it; on the other hand, he should exercise with dumb-bells to enlarge his biceps. Yours are also too small.

PROF. FOURMEN: Being a reader of the TIP TOP, I ask of you the favor to answer the following questions. I am 20 years old, 5 feet 8½ inches high, and weigh 145 pounds. How much should I weigh? How can I broaden my shoulders, deepen my chest, strengthen my stomach, and strengthen my arms? Will it harm me any if I get up at 6 A. M., exercise twenty minutes, take a bath, and take a drink of water, then work from seven to eight, and then eat breakfast, composed of oatmeal and milk, or eggs and coffee with rolls? Is a drink of milk, or eating fruit between meals, harmful to the body? Thanking you in advance, I remain, yours truly,
Corona, L. I. HARRIS HEITZER.

Your weight is just right. Pulley weights will give you the needed exercise for your shoulders; and add deep breathing for the chest. Take the bending exercise of the United States army physical culture without apparatus for the abdominal muscles. The course of training you have laid down for yourself is a good one, with the exception of two things: substitute a cereal coffee—to drink at your meals—for the regular coffee, and eat brown bread instead of rolls made from white flour.

PROF. FOURMEN: As I am a TIP TOP admirer and reader, and have seen so many letters published in your book, should like to get your opinion of my measurements. 1. Are my measurements too large for my age? 2. Do I weigh too much? 3. Please tell me my weak points and strong points. I play baseball and football. I have never played basket-ball or tennis,

but I seem to have taken a liking to both. I love to play football. I play tackle or guard. Am I fitted for either? I am a good runner. I am not short-winded, but when I stop running I get to blowing awful. I don't seem to get tired. Why do I blow so hard? My measurements are as follows: Age, 13 years 2 months; weight, 123 pounds; height, 5 feet 6 inches; chest, normal, 32 inches; expanded, 35 inches; shoulders, 18½ inches; waist, 30 inches; right thigh, 19 inches; left, 19 inches; right thigh, 11½ inches; left, 10 inches; bicep, right, contracted, 11 inches; reflexed, 10 inches; left bicep, contracted, 11 inches; reflexed, 10½ inches. Hoping to see this in the TIP TOP soon, I am, yours,
Norfolk, Va. S. H. M.

Your measurements are too small for one of your height and weight. You ought to weigh several pounds more. Chest expansion is good, but you could stand one having larger measurements. Do not worry about being winded after running any great distance; it would be very strange if you did not. Any violent exercise produces such an effect. You probably notice it more than if you were in the habit of running given distances regularly every day.

PROF. FOURMEN: Kindly answer the following questions for a constant reader of TIP TOP. I am 14 years 2 months old and weigh 100 pounds. My measurements are, stripped, as follows: Height, 5 feet 2 inches; chest, normal, 29 inches; expanded, 31 inches; shoulders, 13 inches; waist, 24½ inches; left thigh, 18 inches; right, 18 inches; left calf, 11½ inches; right, 12 inches; left biceps, contracted, 8¾ inches; expanded, 9¼ inches; right, 9 inches; expanded, 10 inches; left forearm, 8¼ inches; right, 8½ inches; wrist, 6 inches; neck, 12 inches; hips, 30 inches. 1. How are my measurements? 2. What are my weak and my strong points? 3. What exercise should I take to strengthen my arms, for I am a pitcher on a baseball nine? 4. I am captain of an athletic club. What course of training for a day's work would you give? Yours respectfully,
Cincinnati, Ohio. A. MAJOEWSKY.

Train to take on weight and use Indian clubs and the punching-bag to develop your arms and chest. Fifteen or twenty minutes of this in the morning will do to begin with. After exercising, take a sponge bath, and then eat a light breakfast, consisting of fruit, eggs, brown bread, and cereal coffee. Take the same exercises in the evening, before going to bed. Avoid all pernicious habits, and make a practise of getting about eight hours' sleep every night, and in a few months you will notice a marked improvement in your physique.

PROF. FOURMEN: Having been a constant reader of that glorious weekly, TIP TOP, I will ask you what you think of my measurements, which are as follows: Age, 15 years 8 months; height, 5 feet 1½ inches; weight, 98 pounds; chest, normal, 31 inches; expanded, 33 inches; right calf, 12¾ inches; thighs, 19½ inches; neck, 13 inches; waist, 28½ inches. 1. How are my measurements? 2. What are my strong points? 3. What are my weak points? 4. Do my measurements compare favorably with other

boys of my age? Thanking you in advance, I will close, wishing good luck and long life to Tip Top, Burt L. Standish, and Street & Smith,
New York City.

You have a good-sized chest for one of your age. I cannot discover any weakness in your build. The measurements show that you compare favorably with other boys of the same age.

PROF. FOURMEN: I have read TIP TOP WEEKLIES ever since they were published, and I still get them weekly from my news-dealer, so I take the opportunity offered to ask a few questions. I am 15½ years old; height, 5 feet 7½ inches; weight, 135 pounds; chest, normal, 36 inches; expanded, 40¼ inches; waist, 30 inches; across shoulders, 30 inches; thighs, 19 inches; calves, 14 inches; ankles, 10 inches; wrist, 6½ inches; biceps, normal, 10 inches; flexed, 12 inches. Having asked what I think too much, I will close, asking you to tell me my defects and my good points. I remain, always for TIP TOP,
L. R.
New York, N. Y.

You have no great weak points. However, you could increase the size of your chest to good advantage. Deep-breathing exercises and dumb-bell work will give you what you need.

PROF. FOURMEN: I take the liberty of asking a few questions. I am 12 years 10 months old; weight, 65 pounds; height, 4 feet 6 inches; calves, 11¾ inches; ankle, 9 inches; waist, 25½ inches; chest, normal, 26 inches; expanded, 28 inches; contracted, 24 inches; forearm, 9 inches; upper arm, 10 inches; thigh, 15 inches; from shoulder to shoulder, 16 inches; neck, 11½ inches; hips, 29 inches. 1. What are my weak points, and how may I develop them, and how can I increase my wind? 2. Where can I get a copy of "Frank Merriwell's Book of Athletic Development"? Hoping for a speedy reply, I am,
F. P. N.
Anniston, Ala.

1. Train to increase your weight, and use pulley weights for your chest.
2. We will mail it to you for fourteen cents.

PROF. FOURMEN: I am a constant reader of TIP TOP WEEKLY, and therefore take the liberty to ask a few questions. 1. I am 15 years old; weight, 130 pounds; height, 5 feet 8 inches; neck, 14 inches; chest, normal, 32 inches; expanded, 34 inches; biceps, 11½ inches; wrist, 7½ inches; waist, 29 inches; thigh, 19 inches; calves, 12½ inches; ankle, 10 inches. I wear 6¾ hat and No. 8 shoe. 2. I am very clumsy on my feet. Can you tell me a way to get light on them? 3. I have catarrh in the head and do not know what to do to get rid of it. 4. When I run I get a pain in my right side, and if I keep on it changes to the left. During school days I go to bed between nine and ten o'clock and get up about seven. I drink a cup of coffee in the morning and do not touch it the rest of the day. I do not smoke cigarettes, but smoke cubebs. Do you think they will hurt me? In playing baseball I play catcher, and if I throw very much my arm hurts, but just as quick as I stop it don't bother me. I play left half in football. During the summer-time I ride horseback a good deal. Just now it is impossible for me to go to a gym. Hoping to see this in TIP TOP WEEKLY, I remain,
Hamel, Minn.

A HIGH SCHOOL FRESHMAN.

Boxing will make you quick and active on your feet. There is nothing better than this mode of exercise to give one agility. Unless your catarrh has reached the chronic stage it can be easily cured by snuffing cold water up the nostrils three times a day. If you do this every day it will act as a preventative as well. The pains in your side show that you are running too much. Relax for awhile. Give up coffee, even if you use only one cup a day; its effect on the nerves is very harmful. It does not act at once, and for that reason many people think that they are immune; but coffee works slowly and with deadly certainty. Half the nervous troubles of people to-day can be attributed to the excessive use of coffee, tea, and tobacco. Do not smoke any more cubebs, even for your catarrh. The simple remedy I have prescribed is a better one. You probably have been pitching too much and strained the muscles of your arm. This winter's rest will put it in good shape for spring.

PROF. FOURMEN: Kindly answer my questions. Age, 17 years 9 months; height, 5 feet 7 inches; weight, 128 pounds; chest, 34 inches; expanded, 36¼ inches; neck, 13½ inches; shoulders, 15¼ inches; arm biceps, 12 inches; wrist, 6½ inches; thighs, right, 20½ inches; left, 20 inches. 1. How are my measurements? 2. Where are my weak spots? 3. Have I any strong points? 4. Am I built good enough to play end on a one-hundred-and-forty-pound team? Thanking you in advance, I remain,
Pittsburg, Pa.
A LOYAL TIP TOPPER.

Your weight is several pounds below normal. To play football you should weigh at least one hundred and thirty-five pounds. But by proper training you could take on a few more pounds without much difficulty. Pay particular attention to diet, eating potatoes, beans, beef, mutton, and cereals.

PROF. FOURMEN: My measurements are as follows: Age, 15 years; weight, 107 pounds; height, 5 feet ½ inch; neck, 13½ inches; shoulders, 15 inches; chest, normal, 30 inches; expanded, 32½ inches; waist, 27½ inches; biceps, 10 inches; forearms, 9½ inches; wrists, 6½ inches; calves, 12 inches; ankles, 8 inches. 1. Do I weigh enough? 2. What are my weak points, and how can I make them stronger? 3. How can you make a weak back strong? Hoping to see this in print, I remain, a loyal Tip Topper,
New Kensington, Pa.
ELMER REESE.

An increase of three or four pounds would do you no harm. Bending exercises will help your back. Hold the arms stretched over your head and bend over, trying to touch the floor with the tips of your fingers. Keep the knees perfectly rigid during this exercise. Hip baths, followed by brisk rubbing of the affected part with a coarse towel, will strengthen your back.

PROF. FOURMEN: I thought I would write you a letter to give you my measurements. I am 14 years 5 months old; weight, 121 pounds; height, 5 feet 6½ inches; shoulders, across, 18½ inches; biceps, 13 inches; calves, 13 inches; neck, 14 inches; chest, normal, 34 inches; expanded, 36 inches; wrist, 8 inches. I play catcher in a young team at Brockville. Hoping to find this in next week's TIP TOP, I remain,
C. KELTY.
James Street, Brockville, Ontario.

Train to increase your weight and enlarge your chest measurement. The biceps are below the standard. Use dumb-bells for a few months and you will notice a marked improvement.

PROF. FOURMEN: Being a tireless reader of your famous literature, I take the liberty of asking these questions. I am 21 years old; 5 feet 7 inches in height; weight, 151 pounds, stripped; across shoulders, 42 inches; chest, normal, 37 inches; waist, 30 inches; wrist, 7 to 7½ inches; biceps, 12½ to 12 7-16 inches; neck, 15½ inches; thighs, 21½ to 21 5-16 inches; calf, 15 to 15 13-16 inches. I am an expert boxer. Are my measurements right? If not, which are my weak points? Hoping to see this in the columns of TIP TOP, I remain, respectfully yours,
Black Diamond, Wash.
A TIRELESS READER.

You are very chunky and weigh a little more than is necessary for one of your height. This will not matter if you keep in training, so that your weight does not run to fat. I have no doubt that you are a good boxer. It takes an expert man to hold his own with the hardy, well-built coal-miners, such as are found in Black Diamond and other towns right near you, Franklin and Camp Lawton. If you train properly, there is no reason why you should not hold your own with boxers in your town and other famous coal-mines near by, even to Newcastle and Renton.

"GOLDEN HOURS."

Boys, have you any old numbers of Golden Hours? If so, see what numbers are among them and write me, stating price. I will pay liberally to complete my files. Address WILLIAMS, Station "O," Box 24, New York City.

TIP TOP WEEKLY

CAUTION!

All readers of the Renowned Tip Top stories should beware of base imitations, placed upon the market under catch names very similar to Frank Merriwell, and intended to deceive.

- 472—Frank Merriwell's Handicap; or, Hastings, The Hurdler from Humboldt.
- 473—Frank Merriwell's Red Challengers; or, The Hot Game with the Nebraska Indians.
- 474—Frank Merriwell's Fencing; or, For Sport or For Blood.
- 475—Frank Merriwell's Backer; or, Playing Baseball for a Fortune.
- 476—Frank Merriwell's Endurance; or, The Cross-Country Champions of America.
- 477—Frank Merriwell in Form; or, Wolfers, the Wonder from Wisconsin.
- 478—Frank Merriwell's Method; or, The Secret of Becoming a Champion.
- 479—Frank Merriwell's Level Best; or, Cutting the Corners with a New Curve.
- 480—Frank Merriwell's Lacrosse Team; or, The Great Hustle with Johns Hopkins.
- 481—Frank Merriwell's Great Day; or, The Crowning Triumph of His Career.
- 482—Dick Merriwell in Japan; or, Judo Art Against Jiu-Jitsu.
- 483—Dick Merriwell on the Rubber; or, Playing Baseball in the Flowery Kingdom.
- 484—Dick Merriwell's Cleverness; or, Showing the Japs the American Game.
- 485—Dick Merriwell in Manila; or, Papinta, the Pride of the Philippines.
- 486—Dick Merriwell Marooned; or, The Queen of Fire Island.
- 487—Dick Merriwell's Comrade; or, The Treasure of the Island.
- 488—Dick Merriwell, Gap-Stopper; or, A Surprise for the Surprisers.
- 489—Dick Merriwell's Sacrifice Hit; or, Winning by a Hair's Breadth.
- 490—Dick Merriwell's Support; or, Backed Up When Getting His Bumps.
- 491—Dick Merriwell's Stroke; or, Swimming for His Life.
- 492—Dick Merriwell Shadowed; or, The Search for the Lost Professor.
- 493—Dick Merriwell's Drive; or, Evening Up with His Enemy.
- 494—Dick Merriwell's Return; or, The Reappearance at Fardale.
- 495—Dick Merriwell's Restoration; or, Whipping the Team into Shape.
- 496—Dick Merriwell's Value; or, The Success of Square Sport.
- 497—Dick Merriwell's "Dukes"; or, His Fight with Himself.
- 498—Dick Merriwell's Drop-Kick; or, Chester Arlington's Team of Tigers.
- 499—Dick Merriwell's Defeat; or, How Arlington Won the Second Game.
- 500—Dick Merriwell's Chance; or, Taming the Tigers of Fairport.
- 501—Dick Merriwell's Stride; or, The Finish of the Cross Country Run.
- 502—Dick Merriwell's Wing-Shift; or, The Great Thanksgiving Day Game.
- 503—Dick Merriwell's Skates; or, Playing Ice Hockey for Every Point.
- 504—Dick Merriwell's Four Fists; or, The Champion of the Chanson.
- 505—Dick Merriwell's Dashing Game; or, The Fast Five from Fairport.
- 506—Frank Merriwell's Tigers; or, Wiping Out the Railroad Wolves.
- 507—Frank Merriwell's Treasure Guard; or, The Defenders of the Pay Train.
- 508—Frank Merriwell's Flying Fear; or, The Ghost of the Yaqui.
- 509—Dick Merriwell in Maine; or, Sport and Peril in the Winter Woods.
- 510—Dick Merriwell's Polo Team; or, The Rattlers of the Roller Rink.
- 511—Dick Merriwell in the Ring; or, The Champion of His Class.
- 512—Frank Merriwell's New Idea; or, The American School of Athletic Development.
- 513—Frank Merriwell's Troubles; or, Enemies in the Fold.

Back numbers may be had from all newsdealers or will be sent, postpaid, by the publishers upon receipt of price

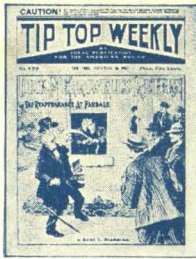
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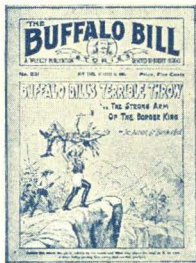
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TIP TOP WEEKLY

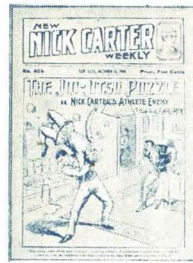
Frank and Dick Merriwell are two brothers whose adventures in college and on the athletic field are of intense interest to the American boy of to-day. They prove that a boy does not have to be a rowdy to have exciting sport.

Buffalo Bill Stories



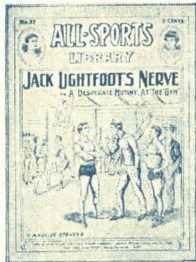
Buffalo Bill is the hero of a thousand exciting adventures among the Redskins. These are given to our boys only in the Buffalo Bill Stories. They are bound to interest and please you.

Nick Carter Weekly



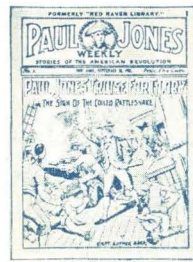
We know, boys, that there is no need of introducing to you Nicholas Carter, the greatest sleuth that ever lived. Every number containing the adventures of Nick Carter has a peculiar, but delightful, power of fascination.

All-Sports Library



All sports that boys are interested in, are carefully dealt with in the All-Sports Library. The stories deal with the adventures of plucky lads while indulging in healthy pastimes.

Paul Jones Weekly



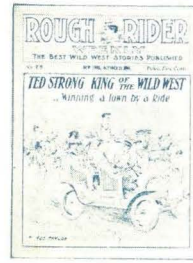
Do not think for a second, boys, that these stories are a lot of musty history, just sugar-coated. They are all new tales of exciting adventure on land and sea, in all of which boys of your own age took part.

Brave and Bold



Every boy who prefers variety in his reading matter, ought to be a reader of Brave and Bold. All these were written by authors who are past masters in the art of telling boys' stories. Every tale is complete in itself.

Rough Rider Weekly



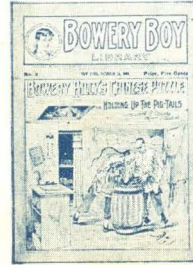
Ted Strong was appointed deputy marshal by accident, but he resolves to use his authority and rid his ranch of some very tough bullies. He does it in such a slick way that everyone calls him "King of the Wild West" and he certainly deserves his title.

Diamond Dick Weekly



The demand for stirring stories of Western adventure is admirably filled by this library. Every up-to-date boy ought to read just how law and order are established and maintained on our Western plains by Diamond Dick, Bertie, and Handsome Harry.

Bowery Boy Library



The adventures of a poor waif whose only name is "Bowery Billy." Billy is the true product of the streets of New York. No boy can read the tales of his trials without imbibing some of that resource and courage that makes the character of this homeless boy stand out so prominently.